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ACTION RESEARCH: IMPLEMENTING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES TO IMPROVE
CLASSROOM CLIMATE

by

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Dedication

The work that is represented in this dissertation in practice could not have been completed without the help of many people.

I would like to thank my colleagues at school, Dr. Bill Coon, Dr. Natalie Osborne Smith, and Kai Brailey who supported my efforts to undertake this study, and who acted as sounding boards throughout this process. I am indebted to “Mr. Patrick,” my cooperating teacher, who opened up his classroom and his heart to help with this research. It was a pleasure to work with you.

Thanks also to my committee members who shared their wisdom and insight in class and regarding this dissertation. I am especially grateful for the guidance, patience, and astute feedback provided by my dissertation chair, Dr. Suha Tamim. You made this process doable and pushed me to create high quality work.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family. To my sons, Lucas and Jacob, thank you for understanding when Daddy had to do school work. Now, let’s go camping! To my wife, Frances, I could not have done this without you. You listened as I shared new learning, provided quiet time for me to work, and encouraged me when the going got tough. More impressively, you did all this while completing your own master’s degree! Thank you for believing in me and making me a better person. I love you!

Abstract

This paper describes action research focusing on implementing restorative practices (RP) to improve the climate in an eighth grade science classroom. This study utilized a concurrent mixed-methods design to determine if the use of RP, specifically affective statements and affective questions, had an impact on classroom climate. Quantitative data consisted administering the Classroom Life Inventory (CLI) to students prior to and following the implementation of RP in the classroom. In addition, a student focus group interview and a teacher interview were conducted following the implementation of RP. The quantitative data were analyzed via descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests. The qualitative data was coded and patterns were observed in order to obtain overarching themes in the focus group and teacher interview. While there were some discrepancies between the qualitative and quantitative data sources, the use of RP did have some effects on classroom climate. Of particular note were increased perceptions of student academic support for one another. Furthermore, qualitative instruments discovered that the use of affective statements and affective questions seemed to enhance the teacher's use of feedback and caused students to feel that the teacher listened to them more than other teachers. The results of this action research and implications of the findings are described in detail, as well as an action plan for continuing this work.

Keywords: classroom climate, restorative practices, school climate, affective statements, affective questions.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The climate of a classroom can have significant implications, both positive and negative, for the students in that particular environment (Smith, Fisher, & Frey, 2015; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, and Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). Changing the climate of a classroom, particularly a negative climate, can be difficult. Restorative practices (RP) is a framework for building relationships and addressing wrongdoing that has been suggested to improve classroom climate (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2009; Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2016; Mirsky, 2011; Smith et al., 2015). This chapter describes a problem of practice regarding classroom climate and a solution involving RP. The frameworks of climate and RP are discussed, as well as the theoretical frameworks that undergird these ideas. A brief overview of the methodology is provided. The chapter concludes with a preview of the remainder of this dissertation in practice (DiP).

Problem of Practice

As an assistant principal at Tulip Tree Middle School (TTMS), a pseudonym, I have the opportunity to visit many classrooms. I have observed that students in one teacher's classroom may be respectful, adhere to classroom norms and expectations, and work well with other students. Some of these same students may exhibit markedly different behaviors in another teacher's classroom. They may be defiant, disrespectful, and/or not cooperative with other students. Why would these students act so differently

from one classroom to another? There are certainly multiple variables at play in these scenarios, but the overarching theme is the climate of the various classrooms. School climate is based on “patterns of school life experiences and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (National School Climate Council, 2007, p. 5). While it is likely that there is variability among the classroom climates within a single school, many of the general characteristics of school climate can be extrapolated to the classroom level (Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2008).

It was surprising to see and feel the different climates that existed from one teacher’s classroom to the next, or even sometimes from one class to the next, with the same teacher. Thapa et al. (2013) describe five dimensions of school climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, institutional environment, and the school improvement process. Classroom observations at TTMS indicate that of these dimensions of school climate, safety and relationships varied the most from one teacher to another. If there were strategies to help teachers improve the safety and relationships within their classroom, then the climate of their classrooms may improve.

Statement of Purpose

Restorative practices (RP) is a framework for working with students to prevent and respond to harm in the classroom (Costello et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2015). RP has been addressed by multiple authors. For example, Costello et al. (2009) explore the philosophy of RP and describe a continuum of RP strategies. Smith et al. (2015) delve deeper into the application of some of these RP strategies and expand on their implementation in the classroom.

The use of RP has been suggested to improve classroom climate (Costello et al., 2009; Gregory et al., 2016; Mirsky, 2011; Smith et al., 2015). Moreover, if teachers, particularly those who have negative classroom climates, were introduced to and implemented RP strategies, then the climate of their classrooms may improve. Improving classroom climate has the potential to positively affect student academic performance, decrease student absenteeism, improve student self-esteem, and improve the psychological and emotional well-being of students (Smith et al., 2015; Thapa et al., 2013). The purpose of the present action research is to determine if the implementation of general RP, particularly affective statements (AS) and affective questions (AQ), will improve classroom climate.

Research questions

This action research study seeks to help a teacher, who wishes to improve the climate of their classroom, implement RP strategies in their classroom that may be able to improve the climate of his/her class. Therefore, the research question is as follows: Will implementing RP, specifically AS and AQ, in the classroom setting have an effect on the climate of that classroom? Guiding questions for the focus group and teacher interview were: What are student perceptions on the climate of the classroom as a result of the use of RP? What were the teacher's perceptions regarding the implementation of RP in the classroom? What were the teacher's perceptions on the climate of the classroom as a result of RP?

Rationale

TTMS is part of a national school reform network called EL Education (EL). EL schools focus on three dimensions of student achievement: mastery of knowledge and skills, character, and high quality work (EL Education, 2015). The climate of a school

can affect all three dimensions of student achievement. An EL school climate is “characterized by safety, kindness, joy in learning, and positive leadership by staff and students” (EL Education, 2015, p. 64). To help achieve this type of school climate, “student misbehavior is treated as a learning opportunity for both students and teachers. Teachers probe for causes of misbehavior or conflict, and consequences are logical, consistent, and clearly communicated” (EL Education, 2015, p. 64). A restorative mindset involves focusing on relationships instead of rules. Smith et al. (2015) summarize this restorative mindset when they state:

Students are going to misbehave as they learn and grow – it’s how we respond to their misbehavior that matters. We believe that students should have a chance to learn from their mistakes and to restore any damaged relationships with others. (p. 3)

The philosophy of RP, as described above, aligns well with the EL beliefs regarding student school climate and discipline.

The implementation of AS and AQ by a teacher in his/her classroom has the potential to improve the climate of that classroom (Costello et al., 2009; Gregory et al., 2016; Mirsky, 2011; Smith et al., 2015). An improved classroom climate has, in turn, the potential to improve student mastery of knowledge and skills, student character, and the production of high quality work (Thapa et al., 2013).

Conceptual Framework

Classroom climate is a sub-category of school climate. This section will describe the components of school and classroom climate, with emphasis on the sections that pertain most directly to the classroom level. An overview of RP will also be provided.

This includes details regarding the RP strategies called affective statements and affective questions, as well as the overall benefits and challenges of RP.

School/classroom climate. School climate refers to the “norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe” (National School Climate Council, 2007, p. 5). A school’s climate “is a product of social interactions among students and with teachers...and has been shown to relate to social situations within classrooms and to the school as a whole” (Koth et al., 2008, p. 96). That is to say that school climate can be affected by factors at the classroom level. Therefore, it is reasonable for a school with an overall positive climate to have individual classrooms where there exist less positive classroom climates.

School climate has been described as having five primary components: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, institutional environment, and the school improvement process (Thapa et al., 2013). While these five dimensions of climate affect students in the classroom, some of the dimensions are more relevant to the classroom setting than others. Individual teachers have more direct control over safety, relationships, and teaching and learning. The dimensions of institutional environment and school improvement process are more relevant to the whole-school level, as the teacher in her/his classroom cannot directly control them. These tend to be controlled by administrators at the school and/or district level.

Positive school and classroom climates have been shown to have multiple benefits. There is evidence that positive climates have a strong effect on students’ academic achievement (National School Climate Council, 2007; Smith et al., 2015; Thapa et al., 2013). Student behavior also tends to be better and incidents of bullying

tend to be decreased in classrooms with a positive climate where students feel safe (Thapa et al., 2013). Additionally, students' mental and physical well-being has been shown to benefit from positive classroom climate (Smith et al., 2015, Thapa et al., 2013).

Restorative practices. RP were born from the restorative justice (RJ) movement. RJ has its origins in the criminal justice field, but has been incorporated into the educational realm as a non-traditional method for addressing harms and repairing relationships after harm has been done in the school setting (Zehr, 2015). RP tends to be a broader approach than RJ. RJ strategies are primarily reactive in nature because they are utilized after there has been an incident that caused harm between people. RJ strategies seek to address the harm that was done, and involves all affected by the harm in determining how to make the situation right (Zehr, 2015). Research on this model of implementation has noted limited success (McCluskey, Kane, Lloyd, Stead, Riddell, & Weedon, 2011). Smith et al. (2015) note that, "it would be a mistake to wait for conflicts to arise before enacting restorative practices - that's what we did early on, and it was a mistake" (p. 85).

While RP does utilize these RJ techniques when harm has been done, it also involves more proactive strategies. These proactive strategies range in their formality. Some RP can be easily implemented by classroom teachers, while others require more specialized training for facilitation (Costello et al., 2009). Research suggests that these types of proactive, whole-school approaches, involving as many people as possible, tend to be the most successful (McCluskey et al., 2011; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Multiple sources also suggest that the use of RP can improve school and classroom climate (Costello et al., 2009; Gregory et al., 2016; Mirsky, 2011; Smith et al., 2015).

It is also noted that whichever model of RJ or RP is implemented in a school, it almost always has to live, to some degree, within the existing discipline structures. There are many schools that have incorporated whole-school models, while retaining some degree of exclusionary consequences, such as detention, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension (McCluskey et al, 2011; Smith et al., 2015).

Affective statements. One of the RP techniques that will be implemented as part of this DiP is the use of AS. AS are used to let others know how their actions are affecting you. For example, if a teacher is being interrupted by a student he may typically say, “be quiet.” The teacher could phrase that in an affective way, though, and say, “I feel frustrated when you interrupt me while I am trying to talk to the class.” Smith et al. (2015) offer a formula for using AS, which is particularly useful for people who are new to this strategy, “I felt [emotion] when [behavior or event] because [reason for emotion]” (p.88). It is also beneficial to be as specific as possible when using AS (Costello et al., 2009).

AS are on the informal end of the RP continuum (Costello et al., 2009; Thosborne & Blood, 2013). This means that they take less formal training and less time to implement effectively, making it an ideal RP strategy for a teacher new to the RP framework to begin with. “Affective statements are some of the easiest and most useful tools for building a restorative classroom” (Costello et al., 2009, p.12). AS are also strong candidates for improving classroom climate because they can improve the relationship between teachers and students, and they can help students develop empathy (Costello et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2015). AS can be used for positive or negative feedback (Costello et al., 2009).

Affective questions. Using AQ is very similar to AS, but is just slightly higher on the RP continuum because it requires slightly more time to implement than AS. However they can often still be used in a matter of minutes (Costello et al., 2009; Thosborne & Blood, 2013). AQ are used when challenging behavior is encountered. AQ would most often be used by a teacher to address conflict between students. The use of AQ seeks to “see conflict in a school setting as an opportunity to foster learning and build relationships” (Costello et al., 2009, p. 16). This is directly aligned with the core practices of EL schools, mentioned previously, which treats student misbehavior as a learning opportunity (EL Education, 2015).

The following AQ can be used when conflicts arise:

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What have you thought about since?
4. Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way have they been affected?
5. What do you need to do to make things right?

(Costello et al., 2009, p. 16; Thosborne & Blood, 2013, p. 41)

Depending on the situation, a teacher may use one or two of these questions, or she may use all five. These questions are typically asked of a student in a private setting, not in front of the class. Using these AQ gives the student, “an important opportunity...to reflect on the impact of their behavior and to learn empathy for those whom they have affected” (Costello et al., 2009, p. 18). Thosborne and Blood (2013) point out that it may take more than once conversation with a student, using these

questions, to effect behavioral changes because new neural pathways are being created, which is not a quick process.

Costello et al. (2009) also offer a set of suggested questions for those who have been affected by harm:

1. What did you think when you realized what happened?
2. What impact has this incident had on you and others?
3. What has been the hardest thing for you?
4. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

(p. 18)

These questions are particularly important because they address the victim. Those students who do something wrong typically receive a great deal of attention from teachers and administrators. Victims, however, are often overlooked. This provides the victim with a chance to process the harmful event, make their feelings known, and have a voice in making things right (Zehr, 2015).

Concerns regarding RP and its implementation. While RP does seem to be a bright spot on the horizon in creating safe school and classroom climates, there are some concerns regarding its implementation.

One concern is the time required to carry out some of the strategies. Some of the more formal practices can take 90 to 120 minutes to complete a session (Amstutz & Mullet, 2015). At TTMS that could be anywhere from one and a half to two and a half class periods of instruction missed. If teachers or other school community members are involved in these processes, such as conferences, when would it occur? Would teachers be able and/or willing to give up that much time to address a single situation?

A second concern is facilitator training. Multiple sources note that trained facilitators should carry out RP processes (Amstutz & Mullet, 2015; Macready, 2009; Zehr, 2015). Some strategies such as AS and AQ, though, require less training for effective implementation (Thosborne & Blood, 2013). That is one reason those specific strategies were chosen for use in this action research.

RP differs from traditional school discipline in that in its truest forms it does not rely solely on exclusionary consequences, but, rather, focuses on the harm done and repairing relationships. Carter (2013) states that, “Conversion of RP from a discipline paradigm to a culture of care is an urgent refinement of the informal curriculum for peace within and beyond the school.” (p. 46). This paradigm shift does present a challenge for teachers who are incorporating RP.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks that undergird the philosophy of RP include progressive influences, as well as influences of social reconstructionism. Progressive scholars believe in a student-centered approach to education, with a focus on the whole child (Cohen, 1999). This whole child approach leads to not only addressing students’ academic needs, but their emotional needs, as well, which is a component of classroom climate as we know it today. Social reconstructionists emphasized creating a better world through education using dialog (Cohen, 1999). RP strive to use dialog to affect change at the individual and classroom level.

Progressive era influences. The philosophy of Johann Pestalozzi, a progressive educator, aligns with those of RP. While his beliefs will be discussed in more detail in chapter two, a brief overview is presented here.

RP principles contain echoes of Pestalozzi's call for developing morals in children through caring (Spring, 2014). As a Progressive educator, Pestalozzi moved away from harsh punishment and towards a model of caring to develop morality. Pestalozzi believed in "the replacement of corporal discipline with control through love" (Spring, 2014, p. 149). This paradigm shift in school discipline paved the way for philosophies like RP, which focus on restoring relationships when wrongdoing has occurred.

Social reconstructionism. The social reconstructionist ideas of Paulo Friere are also evident in the RP framework. Friere's concept of the "Dialogic Man" and his belief in the ability of dialogue to change the world are congruent with the tenets of RP, for that is precisely what RP seeks to do: to bring about positive change to the worlds, or communities, of individuals through structured dialogue. Friere's concept of "praxis" is also central to the philosophy of RP. Positive change can come about for those involved in the dialogue that is the RP process. One such positive change that can come about is an improvement in the climate of the classroom in which they are being implemented. This improved classroom climate can then translate into academic and emotional benefits for students (Smith et al., 2015).

Methodology

This section describes action research and how this DiP fits that format. It will go on to give an overview of the research design for this project, including the participant selection, description of the research site, research question, and sources of data collection.

Action research. Action research refers to a specific form of educational research. Mertler (2014) defines “action research” as,

[A]ny systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, administrators, counselors, or others with a vested interest in the teaching and learning process or environment for the purpose gathering information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how their students learn. (p. 4)

This DiP qualifies as action research because the observer-researcher is an assistant principal at TTMS, where this inquiry was conducted with a local and particular school and with a specific target population of middle-level students and faculty. The identified problem of practice specifically addresses a need at TTMS regarding classrooms with negative climate.

This action research involved collaborating with a teacher to implement RP strategies, which have been reported to improve classroom climate. A concurrent mixed-methods approach was utilized to determine if the implementation of RP strategies had an effect on classroom climate.

The results of this DiP may or may not be applicable to other teachers or schools because it was designed to address the needs of a specific teacher. Dana and Yendol-Hoppy (2014) note that a key feature of teacher-inquiry is that it is “focused on providing insight into a teacher’s classroom practice in an effort to make a change” (p. 7). This DiP, which implemented some RP strategies in a single classroom, could have direct impacts on the students and the faculty member who participated in this action research. The results of this action research project, as well as some of the general processes will be shared with other teachers in the future, as part of an action plan.

Participant selection. Since I am an administrator and I do not have a classroom of my own I recruited a teacher at my school, TTMS, with whom to work. The cooperating teacher was one who wished to improve his classroom climate and was willing to be a part of this action research project. Once I recruited a teacher with whom to work, we selected one of his eighth grade science classes to be a part of this action research project. While all of the students in that particular class experienced the RP being implemented, only a purposefully selected group, whose parents provided permission, participated in the focus group.

Research site. This action research took place at TTMS. TTMS is a suburban middle school located in the southeastern United States. Currently, TTMS is comprised of about 1100 students in grades six through eight. Average class size at TTMS is 27 students. TTMS is part of the EL Education network, which helps shape the vision, mission, and instruction at TTMS.

Data collection. This action research utilized a concurrent mixed-methods approach involving questionnaires, an interview, and a focus group. A classroom climate survey, the classroom life instrument (CLI), was administered to the teacher's students prior to introducing the teacher to any RP strategies (Johnson, Johnson, & Anderson, 1983). Next, I worked with the teacher by providing an orientation for him regarding the implementation of RP. Specifically, the orientation focused on the basic philosophy of RP and the use of affective statements and questions in the classroom. I observed the teacher and provided them feedback regarding the implementation of AS and AQ during the implementation process.

At the conclusion of the implementation period the class took the CLI again. The results of the pre- and post-treatment surveys were compared to see if there are any differences in classroom climate before and after the intervention. This included analyzing the results using descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests. In addition to the surveys, a semi-structured interview with the teacher was conducted after the implementation period to ascertain their perspective on the use of RP and changes in classroom climate. Semi-structured interviews allow for follow-up and clarifying questions (Mertler, 2014). Finally, a focus group was organized consisting of students, with their consent and parental permission, from this teacher's class to gather their perspectives on the use of affective statements and questions and the overall classroom climate.

Conclusion

It is clear that classroom climate has a major impact on students' academic performance and overall well-being (Smith et al., 2015; Thapa et al., 2013). Teachers who have classes where there is a negative climate need ways to help improve that climate. The incorporation of RP has been suggested as one way to help improve classroom climate. RP also aligns well with the EL Education core practices regarding classroom climate, which are utilized at TTMS. I worked with a classroom teacher to help him implement two primary RP strategies: affective statements and affective questions. Incorporating the types of language embedded in these RP into the classroom has been shown to improve teacher-student relationships and helps students develop empathy (Costello et al., 2009; Mirsky, 2011; Smith et al., 2015). Through the use of a concurrent mixed-methods design, utilizing pre- and post-treatment questionnaires, an

interview, and a focus group interview, the effects of the RP strategies on classroom climate were assessed. The information gained from action research DiP can be used to develop an action plan that will continue to use RP to improve the climate of classrooms at TTMS, and possibly beyond.

Chapter one has described the problem, negative classroom climate at TTMS, and a proposed intervention, the implementation of RP. Chapter two, the literature review, explores more in-depth the theoretical and historical bases of school and classroom climate and RP. It also provides more specific information about the types of RP, namely affective statements and affective questions, which will be utilized in this action research study. Chapter three describes the mixed-methods methodology that was utilized to carry out this action research. Chapter four shares the results of the action research. It also includes interpretation of the results. This DiP concludes with chapter five, which summarizes the study and includes the action plan, which is part of the action research design (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014). Limitations of this study, as well as suggestions for future study, are also included.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The climate of a school can have profound effects on its students (Thapa et al., 2013). In order to realize the benefits of a positive school climate, one must understand its components. In addition, it is beneficial to fully grasp strategies, such as RP, that can address particular aspects of school climate in order to improve the overall climate of a school (Gregory et al., 2016; Smith et al. 2016). Similarly, it is also advantageous to be aware of factors that can detract from a positive school climate, such as the reliance on exclusionary consequences.

This literature review examines the relationships that exist between school/classroom climate, exclusionary discipline consequences, and RP. It is postulated that the implementation of RP can increase climate by improving relationships between teachers and students and by using instances of inappropriate behavior as learning opportunities for students to reflect on how their actions affected others. Secondarily, RP have the potential to improve climate by being an alternative to exclusionary consequences, which can have negative effects for not only the students who receive the consequences, but for all students in a school (Perry & Morris, 2014).

Purpose of the Review

At TTMS, it has been noticed that there are some situations where teachers experience negative classroom climates. This is often evidenced by higher numbers of student behavior issues and a more confrontational tone to the class, which can have

negative academic results for students, as well as a myriad of other consequences (Smith et al., 2015). The use of RP has been suggested to improve classroom climate (Costello et al., 2009; Gregory et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2015) The purpose of this literature review is to demonstrate the importance of classroom climate and to describe how the use of RP, particularly affective statements and affective questions can positively influence classroom climate.

This literature review seeks to provide credible evidence pertaining to the research question (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). In this particular case, the desired information is regarding the importance of classroom climate and ways in which RP can impact classroom climate. A comprehensive survey of the existing literature was conducted regarding classroom climate, restorative practices, and related topics. This process utilized ERIC and Education Source databases to locate relevant literature related to the field of education. This included searches using the following key words: classroom climate, school climate, restorative practices, restorative justice, affective questions, and affective statements.

Research Overview

The problem of practice is that there are classrooms at TTMS that seem to be suffering from poor classroom climate. Students in these classes tend to be less respectful towards each other and the teacher, and they are more hesitant to actively volunteer and participate in class activities. The purpose of the present action research is to determine if implementing RP, particularly affective statements and affective questions, will improve classroom climate. The question of interest for this action research is: Will implementing RP, specifically affective statements and questions, have an effect on classroom climate?

School and Classroom Climate

School and classroom climate can have profound academic and non-academic impacts on students (Koth et al., 2008; National School Climate Council, 2007; Thapa et al., 2013). This powerful influence of climate is of critical concern when there are negative climates in schools and/or classrooms, which can result in unfavorable effects for students. This review of the relevant literature will describe the relationship between school and classroom climate. It will also investigate the components of classroom climate and its effects on students.

Relationship between school and classroom climate. The National School Climate Council (2007) describes school climate as, “the quality and character of school life. It is based on patterns of life experiences and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures” (p.5). Koth et al. (2008) also express the pivotal role that social interactions play in creating school climate. They note that these social interactions involve relationships among students as well as relationships between teachers and students. The interactions of teachers and students occur primarily at the classroom level.

When it comes to affecting individual students, Koth et al. (2008) found that classroom-level factors had a greater impact than did school-level factors on students’ perception of school environment. Thus, while school and classroom climate are related and can influence one another, it seems that classroom climate is more influential when it comes to impacting individual students. Therefore, focusing on classroom-level

interventions, such as affective statements and affective questions, may also have a greater likelihood of making an impact on students.

Components of school and classroom climate. There are five key components to school climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, institutional environment, and the school improvement process (Thapa et al., 2013). Many of these five elements of school climate are interrelated, but they will be described individually in more detail.

Safety. Safety refers not just to the physical safety of students in a school, but also to the emotional and psychological safety of a school environment. This echoes of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, which indicates that students cannot learn if they do not first feel physically and emotionally safe. The implication of Maslow's hierarchy of needs will be discussed further in the section describing theoretical frameworks.

Rules, norms, and consistent enforcement of school discipline help to create a sense of physical and emotional well-being in a school (Cohen et al., 2009). The benefits of a climate where students feel safe include reduced bullying, reduced violence, and less aggression (Thapa et al., 2013).

Relationships. Teaching and learning in schools does not occur in isolation. Thus, as students and teachers in schools interact they create relationships. These relationships, whether positive or negative, play a crucial role in school climate. Caring, supportive structure and relationships between staff and students help to create the sense of safety that benefits students (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2011).

The relationships that students have with each other can also have academic impacts (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). For example, when students learn cooperatively from each other they create relationships that promote positive perceptions of support

and friendship (Johnson et al., 1983). Another important relationship in the web of school culture is the student's image of him/herself. Positive relationships with teachers and other students can have positive impacts on a student's perception of him/herself, which can serve to improve their psychological well-being (Hoge, Smit, & Hanson, 1990). Relationships within a school are also connected to the feeling of safety within a school. Schools with more positive student-teacher relationships tend to have fewer behavioral problems and a greater sense of overall safety (Gregory & Cornell, 2009; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wang, Selman, Dishion, & Stormshak, 2010).

Teaching and learning. One of the primary purposes of a school is to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Teaching and learning includes components such as the quality of instruction and social-emotional learning. The quality of instruction in a given classroom has many factors including teacher expectations, teacher's use of praise, opportunities for student participation, and variety of teaching methods (Cohen et al., 2009). The inclusion of character and socio-moral development in the curriculum has had positive impacts on academic achievement (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004). It is interesting to note that positive school culture can positively affect student achievement not only in the immediate time and place, but for years to come (Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998).

Institutional environment. The institutional environment has an impact on school climate. It can be subdivided into two components. The first component of institutional environment is school connectedness/engagement. The second element of institutional environment is the school facilities and resources (Thapa et al., 2013). School connectedness is defined as, "the belief by students that adults and peers in the

school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals” (Centers for Disease Control, 2009, p. 3). When students experience school connectedness they tend to experience less violence, increased satisfaction of school, and increased academic outcomes. It may also help prevent risky behaviors such as sexual promiscuity and drug use outside of school (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004).

School facilities and resources have impacts on school climate. It has also been suggested that there is more school connectedness in smaller schools. Other factors such as layout of the school can also affect students’ perception of safety. Students in schools with more unsupervised spaces tended to have a decreased sense of safety at school (Astor, Benbenishty, & Estrada, 2009). This lack of supervision could certainly contribute negatively to overall school climate.

School improvement process. The school improvement process is enhanced by a school’s climate. Schools that exhibit relational trust have a greater likelihood of implementing successful school improvement initiatives (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Other elements of the school improvement process that should be considered are professional learning for teachers, safe learning climate, relationships between the school, parents, and community, and instructional guidance (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). When these elements are thoughtfully incorporated into a school’s improvement process it increases the likelihood of improving overall school climate.

School climate has significant impacts on students’ academic success, mental well-being, and physical health (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004; Virtanen et al., 2009). These impacts of school

climate are not fleeting, but can be long lasting. One study found that a positive school climate can produce beneficial effects years later (Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998). This study examined the relationship of elements of school climate, collegial leadership, teacher professionalism, academic press, and environmental press, on academic achievement at eighty-six middle schools. They found that these elements of school climate did have significant lasting impacts on students' academic achievement for multiple years.

Each of the components of school climate, safety, relationships, teaching and learning, institutional environment, and school improvement process, plays a role in achieving and maintaining positive school climate. Of these components, safety, relationships, and teaching and learning are most applicable when analyzing climate at the classroom level because teachers have the most direct control over these elements, whereas administrators typically have more influence over the institutional environment and school improvement process. This would explain why, in the same school, there exist classrooms with positive climate and classrooms with negative climate. Even more intriguing, though, is how to help teachers achieve positive classroom climate, so that their students can reap the benefits that often result.

Restorative Practices

Zehr (2015) is widely known as the “grandfather of restorative justice”. Zehr’s work with RJ began in the criminal justice setting and has also been adapted to educational settings. RP is broader than RJ’s focus on relationships and repairing harm in that it involves both proactive and reactive approaches to interacting in schools (Costello et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2015; Thosborne & Blood, 2013). Costello et al.

(2009) produced a seminal work in the RP field, *The Restorative Practices Handbook for Teachers, Disciplinarians, and Administrators: Building a Culture of Community in Schools*. One of the authors, Ted Wachtel, founded the International Institute for Restorative Practices, while the other two, Bob Costello and Joshua Wachtel, work for the same organization. The framework for the restorative philosophy and the continuum of restorative strategies that are described in this book are widely cited in the RP literature. Costello et al. (2009) emphasize that acting restoratively means working *with* others to solve a problem. It does not mean doing something *to* them, *for* them, or not doing anything at all. RP refers to a framework that can be used (not just in schools) to build relationships and address problems when they occur.

Several RP strategies are discussed in the literature inspired by Costello's seminal work (Smith et al., 2015; Thosborne & Blood, 2013). Costello et al. (2009) describe a continuum of RP based on formality. On one end of the continuum exist informal strategies that require training and little time to implement. At the other end of continuum there are strategies that are more formal and require more highly skilled training and time to implement (Thosborne & Blood, 2013). Costello et al. also present a list of RP that goes from least formal to most formal: affective statements, affective questions, small impromptu conferences, group or circle, and formal conferences (Costello et al., 2009).

Smith et al. (2015) and Thosborne and Blood (2013) have taken the strategies described by Costello et al. (2009) and expanded on them. For example, Smith et al. (2015) identify and explain different types of AS, such as identity-building statements

and agency statements. Thosborne and Blood (2013) provide a “formula” for creating AS, and then provide suggestions for implementing RP on a school-wide level.

AS use the pronoun “I” to express how a person has been affected by others. For example, a teacher may respond to a student blurting out by saying, “I am feeling frustrated because you are blurting out and not giving other students a chance to respond” (Thosborne & Blood, 2013). Other types of AS can be proactive strategies that build agency and identity. Identity-building statements provide student the opportunity to analyze themselves and the roles in which they see themselves (Smith et al., 20015). A simple example of this would be when a science teacher refers to his students as “scientists”. The students hear the teacher refer to them as “scientists” and they begin to think of themselves as scientists, and being good at science. Agency statements use specific evidence to help build students confidence. For example, instead of giving a general accolade such as, “good job,” a teacher using an affective statement could say, “I can tell that you put a lot of effort into revising your rough draft. You did a much better job of citing evidence to support your claims.” This type of specific feedback can help develop students’ sense of agency and growth mindset, whereby students realize that they can improve at a task with continued effort (Smith et al., 2015).

AQ are another informal strategy that is typically used when there has been a minor conflict. A teacher might use affective questions a student has continued inappropriate behavior after AS have been used. The teacher would privately speak with the student for a couple of minutes using specific questions. Those questions are: What happened? What were you thinking at the time? What have you thought about since? Who has been affected by what you have done? How have they been affected? What do

you think you need to do to make things right? (Costello et al., 2009, p. 16). This strategy allows a conflict to become a learning opportunity. Students have the chance to reflect on the effects of their actions and to develop a strategy for making the situation right.

Impromptu conferences are in the middle of the formality continuum (Costello et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2015). This strategy would be utilized when there is a conflict involving multiple students. For example, if a teacher witnessed a conflict in the hallway between two students, the teacher may pull the two students aside for an impromptu conference. The impromptu conference is designed to quickly address a problem and to keep it from escalating. It does it in a way that has students express their feelings about the behaviors that occurred and how to resolve the situation (Smith et al., 2015). The teacher would ask the AQ described in the previous paragraph to each participant and allow them to answer without being interrupted. Since more people are involved these conferences can take a little longer to facilitate.

“Groups” or “circles” is a more formal RP strategy because they take more time to carry out. Circles can be used in many contexts, from pedagogical protocols, such as a Socratic seminar, to strategies for discussing class-wide concerns (Smith et al., 2015). All circle processes involve a group sitting in a circle, with all members able to see everyone else. Often a talking piece is passed around to indicate who is talking at a given time. The topics for circle discussions can vary greatly. Some circles, such as check-in circles, are very informal and are used at the beginning of a week/class to give students the opportunity to say how they are doing and to build relationships. Circles can also be used for goal setting, discussing class norms, addressing classroom behavior problems, or

engaging in academic content (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). These strategies require more time and planning to carry out than do the previously described RP strategies.

The most formal RP is the formal conference (Costello et al., 2009). These types of conferences typically include all parties that were involved or affected by wrongdoing. These situations have reached a point where they could not be solved by less-formal RP strategies. A highly trained facilitator implements protocols to conduct the conference using restorative questions in a specific sequence with the goal of restoring relationships that have been damaged. Ultimately, each participant has a chance to express their feelings, describe how they were affected by the situation, and to participate in figuring out what needs to be done to make the situation right (Wachtel, O'Connell, & Wachtel, 2010). Formal conferences can be lengthy because it is important for all participants to have a chance to speak. This time requirement and the need for a highly skilled facilitator make it the most formal RP strategy.

Ultimately, all RP strategies involve how people talk with one another (Smith et al., 2015). From the informal affective statements and affective questions to the formal conferences, all RP strategies have protocols for using language to express feelings and to promote a shared understanding. Some of the language-usage protocols require more skilled training and time to effectively implement, while others require less training and quick to employ. Regardless of the complexity of the strategy, though, the use of language is a powerful tool in dealing with human relationships.

All of these RP revolve around the use of language. How teachers talk to students can be extremely powerful. It can let students know what teachers think about them, and it can influence how students think about themselves (Johnston, Ivey, &

Faulkner, 2011). RP strategies such as AS and AQ use purposeful language to help students understand the teacher better, understand themselves better, and to develop empathy for others (Costello et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2015).

Sprinkle, Hunt, Simonds, and Comadena (2006) found that the language teachers used with students when correcting behavior can have significant effects. They found that prosocial behavior-alteration techniques (BATs) were more effective than antisocial BATs. Prosocial statements that included an efficacy component were not only positive in nature, but gave students a suggested action to take to achieve success. Antisocial BATs often include a threat, and may or may not include an efficacy component that gives students a strategy for avoiding the threatened punishment. The findings suggested that, “efficacy alone is a far better compliance-gaining strategy than efficacy plus fear” (Sprinkle et al., 2006, pp. 398-399). These findings also illustrate the power of language used between teachers and students, and align with RP strategies, particularly affective statements. Affective statements avoid antisocial BATs and provide some efficacy information to students.

Benefits of RJ and RP. The use of RJ and RP has been suggested to have positive impacts on school climate (Costello et al., 2009; Gregory et al., 2016; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Smith et al., 2015). These impacts can often be found by analyzing the number of students receiving exclusionary consequences such as suspensions and expulsions. Since RJ and RP are alternatives to exclusionary consequences, successful implementation of RJ and RP are often followed by lower rates of suspensions and expulsions from school (Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Ristenberg, 2006).

McCluskey, Lloyd, Kane, Riddel, Stead, & Weedon (2008) conducted a study on the use of RP in 18 Scottish schools. They conducted surveys and interviews with pupils, teachers, and parents, conducted on-site observations, and analyzed school and national data. Their findings indicated that there were various levels of success in different schools. Schools who utilized RP only in response to serious incidents indicated that the RP were successful for the specific students involved in those incidents, but there were no significant changes in overall school climate. The most successful RP implementations involved schools who utilized whole-school approaches that incorporated pro-active and reactive strategies. These schools saw positive impacts in staff and pupil interactions, fewer discipline referrals, fewer playground incidents, fewer exclusionary consequences, and a reduced need for external support (McCluskey et al., 2008).

Stinchcomb, et al. (2006) describe a school district in Minnesota that implemented RJ. This district chose to use circles as their primary restorative strategy. They note that over a 3 year period behavioral referrals for physical aggression in elementary schools fell from 773 to 153, suspensions in junior high dropped from 110 to 55, and senior high suspension dropped 132 to 95 (Stinchcomb et al., 2006).

Grossi and Mendes dos Santos (2012) describe the implementation of RP in four Brazilian schools. Their findings indicate that RP, “promoted a healthier and peaceful school environment” (Grossi & Mendes dos Santos, 2012, p. 134). This was evidenced by fewer students being sent to administrators for disciplinary concerns. Instead, teachers used RP strategies to address student conflict. It was also noted that RP was an effective means to address issues of bullying. Feedback from students who were involved in

bullying situations and participated in the RP included, “Everybody thinks it’s cool. It helps to solve the conflicts. It is good. You make peace after a fight.” and “By dialoguing, we are able to understand each other. Then, the circle helps to solve the conflict” (Grossi & Mendes dos Santos, 2012, p. 133).

RP can also have positive impacts on particular elements of school climate such as relationships. Gregory et al. (2016) studied the implementation of RP in twenty-nine high school classrooms. They found that teachers who most effectively implemented RP had more positive relationships with diverse students. This was evidenced by surveys that indicated students perceived these teachers as more respectful. These teachers also issued fewer discipline referrals, specifically for Latino and African-American students (Gregory et al., 2016).

Challenges of RP. While the use of RP does have benefits it also poses some challenges. The greatest challenge may be a philosophical opposition to traditional discipline structures in schools, such as zero tolerance policies, that rely on punitive consequences (Gregory et al., 2016; McCluskey et al., 2011; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Instead of focusing on administering consequences when rules have been broken, the restorative philosophy places an emphasis on using dialogue to involve all affected parties in addressing the harm and repairing the relationships (Costello et al., 2009). Institutions and individuals who attempt to implement RP within a punitive philosophy do not tend to experience the full benefits of the RP framework (McCluskey et al., 2011). Thus, attempting to shift a school and/or individual’s paradigm from a punitive to a restorative approach is challenging (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).

Another challenge to implementing RP is that it can be time consuming. While affective statements and affective questions, which are on the informal side of the RP continuum, are not time consuming other practices such as circle and restorative conferences and be quite time consuming. The latter can sometimes require hours to complete (Amstutz & Mullet, 2015). In today's world of high-stakes testing educators may be reluctant for students or themselves to devote that much time to addressing individual incidents (Gregory et al., 2016). Logistically, it can also be difficult to carve this much time out of a school day for teachers and students. Implementing the RP of affective statements and affective questions, which are on the informal side of the continuum and require less time to enact, would alleviate the time challenges that are encountered when implementing more formal strategies. That is why AS and AQ were selected as the specific RP strategies for this action research project: teachers require relatively little training and time to implement them.

Theoretical Frameworks

RP has been influenced by the ideas of multiple theoretical frameworks, particularly Progressivism, Social Reconstructionism, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Progressive ideas such as educating the whole child and developing the children's morals align well with the restorative mindset, which focuses on relationships and realizing the impact of one's actions on others (Thosborne & Blood, 2013; Kohn, 2015). Social reconstructionists believe in the power of education to change society (Cohen, 1999). Dialogue is an important tool that can be used to bring about social change (Freire, 2000). RP is a way of being that relies on the intentional use of dialogue to build capacity, repair harm, and strengthen relationships (Costello et al., 2009). Using RP on a small scale with

individuals in a classroom could eventually lead to changes at larger levels such as schools and society. Maslow (1943) posited that people had various levels of needs, and their most basic needs must be met before subsequent levels of needs can be addressed, with the ultimate level being that of self-actualization. RP is a means of helping students meet the needs of safety and self-esteem.

Progressivism. Progressive educators, such as Pestalozzi, were some of the first to emphasize the importance of the whole child (as cited in Cohen, 1999), and to suggest that the moral development of the child was as important as the intellectual development. Pestalozzi stated, “The first instruction of the child should never be the business of the head or of reason; it should always be the business of the senses, of the heart, of the mother” (Pestalozzi, 1894, p. 189). He goes on to say, “It [human education] is for a long time the business of the heart, before it is business of the reason (Pestalozzi, 1894, pp. 189-190). These ideas paved the way for RP. For example, Pestalozzi believed that educators were responsible for structuring the school environment in order to help shape children’s moral ideas (as cited in Spring, 2014). RP is a means of structuring a school or classroom environment to focus on the effects of one’s actions and on relationships with others (Thosborne & Blood, 2013). The teacher or facilitator uses structured dialogues that develop moral ideas. Pestalozzi’s theories also led to using love as a means of student control rather than corporal punishment (Spring, 2014). While true RP does not aim to control participants, it does, in some cases, aim to replace exclusionary disciplinary consequences with caring and empathy.

Social reconstructionism. There are influences from social reconstructionism in RP, as well. In “Pedagogy of the Oppressed,” Paulo Freire (2000) writes of the power of

dialogue to “transform the world” (p. 87). Freire’s concept of the “dialogical man” represents the quintessential RP participant. He states, “The ‘dialogical man’ is critical and knows that although it is within the power of men to create and transform, in a concrete situation of alienation men may be impaired in the use of that power” (p. 91). These “concrete situations,” such as instances of classroom conflict or other forms of harm, cause people’s ability to change and heal to be damaged, causing pain for those involved. If the participants in the harmful events are willing to engage in dialogue, though, their worlds can be transformed. Freire (2000) describes transformational dialogue (or what it is not) when he says:

[D]ialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person’s “depositing” ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be “consumed” by the discussants. Nor yet is it a hostile, polemical argument between men who are committed neither to the naming of the world, nor to the search for truth, but rather to the imposition of their own truth. (p. 89)

RJ is a means of achieving transformational dialogue. Amstutz and Mullet (2015) define RJ as an inclusive, collaborative approach for being in community with others. When harm occurs, RJ approaches affirm the viewpoints and needs of those affected, especially the victims. This approach encourages healing without alienating or coercing others to conform.

Freire’s (2000) description of dialogue as being a “united reflection” is echoed by Amstutz and Mullet’s (2015) depiction of “inclusive, collaborative approaches for being

in community”. In his description of dialogue, Freire implies that true dialogue is a “naming of the world” and a “search for truth”. RP gives participants the opportunity to “name their world”; that is, to share their role in the “concrete situations”, and how they were affected by those harmful events. For example, when using affective statements teachers let students know how they have been affected by the student’s behavior. When affective questions are used the student has a chance to share his/her thoughts and feelings on a subject. This sharing of truth by all participants is a powerful dialogue that can lead to changes in behavior.

When people willingly engage in true dialogue they have the ability to change their worlds. Online, the Freire Institute (2016) describes “praxis” saying,

It is not enough for people to come together in dialogue in order to gain knowledge of their social reality. They must act together upon their environment in order critically to reflect upon their reality and so transform it through further action and critical reflection. (par. 1)

That, praxis, is the goal of RP: to provide a means for those who have been involved in conflict to share their stories, develop a way to make things right, and create positive changes for all involved. The implementation of RP is also a concrete step in the praxis of creating safer, saner schools for the benefit of all students (Mirsky, 2007).

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Maslow (1943) proposed that humans have a hierarchy of five needs, ranging from basic, physiological needs, to advanced, self-actualization. Maslow (1970) updated his original list of needs to also include cognitive and aesthetic needs, so that the revised list, from basic to advanced is: physiological, safety, love, esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, and self-actualization. In this hierarchy the

most basic needs must be met before a person can move their attention to the next higher level. For example, a person must meet their physiological needs before they begin to focus on their safety needs. This pattern carries all the way up to each successive level of need.

The most basic need is physiological, which refers to the basic elements needed to sustain life such as air, food, and water. Once these needs are met one may focus on safety. The need of safety includes physical safety as well as a sense of order and predictability. The next level of need is the need of love. This does not only include romantic love, but also a more general sense of belonging to a group (Maslow, 1943). The fourth level of need is that of esteem. “Esteem” refers to a need for self-respect and respect from others. Without meeting this need of self-esteem, a person may lack confidence, feel inferior, and develop a sense of helplessness (Maslow, 1943). When a person has met their need for esteem then they may proceed to meeting their cognitive needs. The basic cognitive needs include the desire to know and then the desire to understand (Maslow, 1970). This basic need can be evidenced in the curiosity of children, who tend to be naturally inquisitive about the world around them, assuming their other basic needs are being met (Maslow, 1970). When an individual’s more basic needs have been gratified, then they may experience these cognitive phenomena: keener cognition, improved intuitive powers, increased creativity, pleasure in examining complex ideas, and less fear of the unfamiliar (Maslow, 1970). Aesthetic needs overlap somewhat with other categories, but include the need for symmetry, closure, and structure (Maslow, 1970). The ultimate need is that of self-actualization. Maslow (1970) succinctly describes this need by stating, “What humans *can* be, they *must* be” (p. 22).

This means that, once other basic needs are met, individuals have some basic desire to accomplish. These desires vary by individual, but examples may be to make music, help others, play a sport, become a parent, or to be a carpenter. Ultimately, though it is the individual's need to realize their potential.

The implementation of RP in classrooms can help meet students' basic needs, namely safety and esteem, so that they may proceed up the hierarchy to accomplish their cognitive needs and, ultimately, attain self-actualization. The RP of affective statements and affective questions have the potential to improve classroom climate by creating emotional safety in the classroom (Thosborne & Blood, 2013). This establishment of emotional safety helps meet students' basic need for safety. Without meeting this need of safety students would not be able to proceed to achieving higher level needs. Similarly, the use of affective statements, particularly identity-building and agency statements, can help build students' self-esteem. Identity-building statements help students consider themselves and the roles that they take on. This may include using terms like "scholars," "scientists," or "historians" when referring to students in class. Using these types of terms helps students identify themselves as these types of people (Smith et al., 2015). Agency statements use evidence to discuss students' outcomes. For example, instead of using a general statement like "good work", which does not relay much specific information, a teacher may say something like, "I can tell that you have been doing your math homework because you performed much better on this week's quiz." The second statement indicates the students' actions and the result of those actions. This helps the student realize the effects of their actions (Smith et al., 2015).

Using these types of affective statements can help build students' self-confidence and help them gratify their need for esteem. Gratification of the esteem need, then allows students to proceed up the hierarchy of needs to meet their cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, and, ultimately, to meeting the need of self-actualization.

Discipline in American Schools

Student discipline is a field that has developed along with schooling in America. For much of the history of American schooling discipline was based on a system of punishments, including corporal punishment, and rewards (Butchart, 1995). As schooling and philosophies about education evolved so, too, did practices regarding student discipline. Progressives began to focus on the individual student and educating the whole child. This ushered in the idea of building relationships between teachers and students. During the twentieth century the use of corporal punishment waned, but the use of exclusionary consequences such as in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion from school increased (Butchart, 1995). Contemporary issues have emerged as a result these exclusionary consequences, particularly the school-to-prison pipeline (STPP), and concerns of inequality in school discipline. In the last forty years the ideas of RJ and RP have been introduced to American Education. Many view RJ and RP as alternatives to exclusionary consequences that have great promise in addressing behavioral concerns while mending relationships and keeping students in school (Gonzalez, 2012).

Rewards and punishment. The early American education system was heavily influenced by European philosophers such as John Locke. Spring (2014) writes, "Locke argues, the most important factor in education is the development of correct habits,

which depends on proper manipulation of rewards and punishments” (p. 41). This reliance on rewards and punishments is very different from the underlying beliefs about RP. Smith et al. (2015) share that, “Rewards and consequences don’t work - or at least they don’t teach. They may result in short term changes, but in reality they promote compliance and little else” (p.6). They contend that over time rewards lose their effectiveness; the rewards must become more valuable and/or more frequent to maintain the same levels of efficacy. Smith et al. also share that consequences or punishments have been shown to create negative feelings that can lead to further behavioral issues. “Punishments don’t teach, they just create more distance between teachers and students” (Smith et al., 2015, p. 9). Since early American schools were based upon the beliefs such as those of Locke, RP would not have been a practice in those schools.

Throughout much of the Nineteenth Century the leading educational practice was the Lancasterian system, known for its discipline and orderliness (Butchart, 1995). Lancaster’s system created a bureaucracy that utilized student monitors who taught other students reported misbehaviors to the teacher. In this system discipline methods included students, “having wooden logs placed around their necks. Extreme offenders were placed in a sack or basket suspended from the roof of the school in full view of the rest of the pupils” (Spring, 2014, p. 64). The Lancasterian system also utilized rewards for students such as being promoted to the rank of monitor and wearing a conspicuous badge (Butchart, 1995). The relationship with teachers and students was greatly diminished as students were motivated by the disciplinary bureaucracy rather than through a relationship with the teacher (Butchart, 1995).

Progressive shift to care. In the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries Progressivism began to emerge. Progressives believed in learning by doing, and the centrality of collaboration, community, and relationships (Spring, 2014). In stark contrast to the Lancasterian disciplinary consequences, the Pestalozzian theory relied on, “the replacement of corporal discipline with control through love” (Spring, 2014, p. 149). The shift in a reliance on harsh discipline to a reliance on love to shape students’ behavior and moral education is a major step toward beliefs that would support RJ.

Caring is another factor that may contribute to improving school climate by improving relationships between students and teachers (Ambrosetti, Cho, & Slate, 2009). The positive correlation between a teacher’s perceived level of caring and their effectiveness has been evidenced from elementary school through high school (Schulte, Slate, and Onwuegbuzie, 2008; Schulte, Slate, and Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Slate, Capraro, and Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The use of RP may be able to enhance this caring relationship expressing concern and regard from teacher to student.

Noddings is an educational scholar, whose work focuses on caring, ethics, moral education, school structures that promote caring, and feminine and maternal viewpoints to inform caring and education (Bergman, 2004; Flinders, 2001). According to Noddings (2013) there is a relationship between the one-caring and the cared-for. The one-caring is receptive to the situation and needs of the cared-for. “Caring involves stepping out of one’s own personal frame of reference into the other’s. When we care, we consider the other’s point of view, his objective needs, and what he expects of us” (Noddings, 2013, p. 24). It is not enough for the one-caring to simply say, “I care”. If the cared-for does not believe that the one-caring truly cares, then a caring relationship does not exist. So, when

using affective statements the student must believe that the teacher cares about him/her in order for the statements to be effective. What might convince the cared-for that the one-caring does care? Perhaps it is a sense of vulnerability. Noddings (2013) states, “it is clear that my vulnerability is potentially increased when I care, for I can be hurt through the other as well as through myself” (p. 33).

Actions are another aspect of caring. The one-caring often acts to promote the well-being of the cared-for (Noddings, 2013). The one-caring recognizes that the cared-for is in a certain concrete situation. Then, because they care, they act in a way to promote the welfare of the cared-for. This action can be a way that the cared-for recognizes the genuine caring nature of the relationship. However, the perceived attitude of the one-caring is more important than actions (Noddings, 2013). This is because an act may seem very caring to outsiders, but could harbor underlying negative attitudes that are apparent only to the cared-for. Costello et al. (2009) note, for affective statements and affective questions to be effective they must be used with the appropriate mindset and delivery. For example, yelling angrily at a student “What were you thinking?” might be using restorative words, but is certainly not embodying a caring, restorative demeanor. For affective statements and affective questions to be effective the student must believe that the teacher cares for him. The teacher’s words and demeanor must be congruent.

The cared-for also has a role in the caring relationship. Noddings (2013) notes that in the confines of a caring relationship the cared-for is more willing to be his true self; “this willing and unselfconscious revealing of self, is his major contribution to relation” (p. 73). This contribution fulfills the one-caring; it is the fruit that they get from the caring relationship. Thus, when a student truly believes that a teacher cares about

him/her they are more likely to be their true self towards that teacher. This is often the reward for which the teacher is striving.

The roles of the one-caring and the cared-for do translate to the framework of RP. The primary methodology of RP is to promote affective language between people to build relationships and solve conflicts. Noddings (2013) also acknowledges the importance of dialogue in caring, “What I have been emphasizing so far is the central importance of dialogue in nurturing the ethical ideal” (p. 121). Dialogue is a major means by which caring relationships are created and maintained. Noddings (2013) also adds, “The purpose of dialogue is to come into contact with ideas and to understand, to meet the other and to care” (p. 186).

In the context of this action research project, RP are primarily enacted in response to classroom disturbances. In a classroom setting the teacher typically holds a position of power over the students. Many caring relationships also begin with unequal power, such as that of parent and child. The one with more power is often the one-caring and the one with less power is often the cared-for. These roles can interchange, though. Everyone experiences both roles at various points in their lives. In a RP strategy, such as the use of affective questions the teacher may initially take on the role of one-caring and the student the role of cared-for. As the parties engage in real dialogue and truly listen to each other they can, as Noddings (2013) describes, step “out of one’s own personal frame of reference into the other’s. . . consider[ing] the other’s point of view, his objective needs, and what he expects of us” (p. 24). Over the course of this dialogue, the teacher and student may at various times play both the roles of one-caring and cared-for. If the attitude and actions of the teacher are perceived as genuinely caring by the student, then

these parties have created a caring relationship. The student, by being his or her most genuine self throughout this process, also contributes to the building of a caring relationship.

Exclusionary consequences. Exclusionary consequences in schools typically include in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion (Fabelo, Thompson, Plotkin, Carmichael, Marchbanks, & Booth, 2011). In-school suspension typically involves keeping students at school, but removing them from class and sequestering them away from their peers. Out-of-school suspension is a consequence whereby students are not allowed to come to school for a prescribed number of days. If a student is expelled from school then they are either assigned to an alternative education program that is not their home school, or they are no longer allowed to attend any school in that district (Fabelo et al., 2011). Since the 1970s the use of exclusionary consequences has doubled (Losen, 2011). Despite the wide use of exclusionary consequences, there are negative effects as a result of their frequent use. At the school level, increased use of exclusionary consequences correlates with a more negative perception of school climate (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). At the individual level, the use of suspension and exclusion is associated with lower academic achievement (Rausch & Skiba, 2005). Students who are recipients of exclusionary consequences are also at a greater risk of dropping out of school (Suh & Suh, 2007). Exclusionary practices do not just negatively affect the students who are suspended or expelled. Perry and Morris (2014) found that “higher levels of exclusionary discipline within schools over time generate collateral damage, negatively affecting the academic achievement of nonsuspended students in punitive contexts” (p. 1067).

Zero tolerance policies. In addition to the use of exclusionary consequences, zero tolerance policies proliferated in the United States beginning in the 1980s and 1990s. These policies have been defined as those that, “assign explicit, predetermined punishments to specific violations of school rules, regardless of the situation or the context of the behavior” (Boccanfuso & Kuhfield, 2011, p. 1). Most often, the predetermined punishment is suspension or expulsion from school (Fabelo et al., 2011). Typically, these infractions include possessing weapons and drugs at school, but have even been expanded to include, in some locations, possession of over-the-counter medications and talking back to teachers (Payne & Welch, 2015; Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Ristenberg, 2006). The use of zero tolerance policies in many schools across America dramatically increase the number of students who receive exclusionary consequences, and, therefore, experience the previously discussed negative effects of suspension and expulsion (Wallace et al., 2008). In many cases where zero-tolerance policies are enacted, such as the use of weapons, drugs, or violence on school campus, law enforcement also becomes involved in the situation, thereby causing the youth to become involved with the criminal justice system (Kupchik & Monahan, 2006; Mallet, 2016). While these zero tolerance policies were intended to make schools safer, there is no statistical evidence that they are doing so (Kupchik & Monahan, 2006). Instead, these policies seem to be contributing to phenomena such as the school to prison pipeline (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014).

Minority students and boys tend to have less positive perceptions of school climate than their peers. In their discussion of factors contributing to classroom climate, Koth et al. (2008) described that male and minority students reported that the

environment was less safe and experienced lower academic achievement than did their peers. This suggests that minority students and boys, in particular, would benefit from strategies to improve school and classroom climate. It has been suggested that boys actually commit more behavioral infractions than girls (Skiba, et al., 2002). Would building better relationships with boys or increasing their sense of empathy, by using RP, help curb their misbehavior?

It was noted that minorities also tend to have a less positive perception of school climate (Koth et al., 2008). This, too, may relate back to relationships with staff. Skiba et al. (2002) found that white students tended to be referred to the discipline office more often for objective infractions like smoking, obscene language, vandalism, and leaving class without permission. Black students, however, tended to be referred for actions such as disrespect, excessive noise, threats, and loitering. The infractions for which black students were referred were more subjective in nature. Might the use of RP strategies help build stronger relationships between staff and students so that some of these discipline referrals be avoided?

School to prison pipeline. As a result of the increased use of exclusionary consequences in schools, a phenomenon has developed known as the STPP. While there is no official definition of the STPP, it is a construct that suggests that the use of exclusionary consequences in American schools, such as suspensions and expulsions, along with the increased involvement of law enforcement in school discipline, results in students with school discipline issues being ushered into the juvenile justice system and, eventually, adult prisons (Fabelo et al., 2011; Mallet, 2016). African American students, in particular, tend to receive disproportionately high numbers of discipline referrals for

more subjective infractions (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Thus, African American students are at a higher risk of entering the STPP because of the higher number of discipline referrals they receive (Skiba, et al., 2014). The institution of zero-tolerance policies in schools across the nation is also thought to have contributed to the STPP (Mallet, 2016). If zero tolerance policies were relaxed and schools had other options, it may reduce the number of students, particularly African American students, who enter the criminal justice system for school discipline violations (Wilson, 2013). Other subgroups of students who are disproportionately affected by school discipline are students with disabilities, African American girls, and non-heterosexual girls (Skiba et al., 2014). While there have been correlational studies that link the increased use of exclusionary consequences for specific subgroups of students to their likelihood of entering the STPP, a causal link has not yet been established. There may be other contributing factors such as poverty (Skiba et al., 2014).

A history of differential treatment. Having rules unequally enforced against them is not a new experience for African Americans. In *Slavery by Another Name* (2008), Blackmon describes a corrupt system of industrial slavery that existed in the U.S. between the Civil War and World War II. During this time African American men were often arrested for little or no reason. When they could not pay the imposed fines private companies would pay these fines on their behalf, essentially buying them from the county or state. The men would then have to work off their debts to these private companies. “At the end of the 1880s, thousands of black men across the South were imprisoned in work camps only for violations of the new racial codes, completely subjective crimes, or no demonstrable crime at all” (Blackmon, 2008, p. 99).

Throughout the era of legalized slavery described by Blackmon (2008), “charges such as vagrancy, adultery, using obscene or abusive language...suddenly became common, and were almost always filed against African Americans” (p. 79). The subjectivity of the crimes for which blacks were arrested after Reconstruction is eerily similar to the subjectivity of discipline violations many black students receive in schools today. In their study, Skiba et al. (2002) noted that the overrepresentation of African Americans receiving discipline referrals was rooted in the classroom. It started with the teachers, and the reasons for their referrals of African Americans, in this study, tended to be for more subjective offenses such as excessive noise and loitering.

Restorative Justice. The roots of RJ extend back in history to native cultures such as Native Americans and First Nations in North America, Aboriginal tribes in Australia, and Maori of New Zealand. These indigenous people used strategies to discuss and address communal issues that are very similar to strategies incorporated by the RJ movement (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013; Zehr, 2015). The modern RJ field emerged in America in the 1970s in the criminal justice field, as restorative conferences became an alternative to typical legal consequences such as probation and incarceration (Zehr, 2015). Zehr, who is often referred to as the father of RJ, noted that the legal system often failed to meet the needs of all involved when harm occurred; including victims and the community (Amstutz & Mullet, 2015; Zehr, 2015). The restorative process allows for all involved to be heard and to be a part of the process for putting things right (Zehr, 2015).

Since the 1970s, these restorative beliefs and practices used in the legal system have been modified and introduced into the school settings, first in places like Australia and New Zealand (Thosborne & Blood, 2013). These school-based RJ programs then

influenced modern American schools with sporadic experimentation and implementation of RJ practices in the U.S. (Zehr, 2015). RJ has also been implemented in schools in Canada, Scotland, and Brazil with varying degrees of success (Grossi & Santos, 2012; Maag, 2012; McCluskey, et al., 2008).

RJ programs in schools are typically reactive in nature in that they address an incident after it has occurred (McCluskey et al, 2006). When harm has occurred, RJ aims to bring together all those who were affected. Participants sit in a circle and a trained facilitator carries out a restorative conference that uses specific questions in a strategic order that allows all participants to share their story and how they were affected by the incident (Costello et al., 2009). The ultimate goal of RJ is to repair the relationships that have been damaged. To accomplish this goal, all involved in the restorative conference decide what needs to be done to make the situation right (Costello et al., 2009). While the use of RJ in response to harm has been noted to benefit the individual students involved in the conferences, its use is not widespread enough to have a positive effect on whole school climate (McCluskey et al., 2008; Thosborne & Blood, 2013).

Restorative practices. RP has evolved out of the RJ movement in the criminal justice system and schools. RP differs from RJ in that RP tends to be more inclusive and proactive. Instead of only involving those who have been affected by a harmful situation, the RP framework can involve whole schools (McCluskey et al., 2008). In addition, the use of RP does not require a harmful incident in order to be enacted. RP strategies can be used to build community, improve relationships, and promote self-confidence before harmful incidents occur (Costello et al., 2009). These strategies, specifically affective statements and circles, have been described in previous sections in this chapter. When

harmful incidents do occur at school, RP incorporates RJ strategies, such as affective questions, restorative circles, and restorative conferencing, to address those specific situations (Thosborne & Blood, 2013). The most inclusive forms of RP implementation include, “an approach emphasizing whole school ethos building, encompassing preventive and educative aims at all levels, but also operating as a response to wrongdoing, conflict, or when a relationship has broken down” (McCluskey et al., 2008, p. 109). These whole school approaches had the most widespread benefits, including contributing to an improvement in overall school climate (McCluskey et al, 2008; Thosborne & Blood, 2013).

RP represent an alternative to exclusionary consequences and zero tolerance policies (Gonzalez, 2012; Mallet, 2016). While many schools may be reluctant to go so far, initially, as to use restorative practices when students fight or bring illegal substances or weapons on campus, it has the potential to help address the root causes of these issues and to decrease the volume of juveniles in the criminal justice system (Wilson, 2013). Since African American students are disproportionately affected by school discipline, the implementation of alternatives to exclusion, such as RP, would be a step in addressing the needs of a population that has been historically disenfranchised (Anyon, Jenson, Altschul, Farrar, McQueen, Greer, Downing, & Simmons, 2014; Blackmon, 2008; Skiba et al., 2002).

While it is not definitive that the increased use of suspensions and expulsions is leading students to prison, it does seem that students who receive many disciplinary infractions are more likely to end up in prison (Skiba et al., 2014). It is also evident that African Americans are overrepresented in school discipline statistics as well as in

American prisons. An alternative to exclusionary practices, such as RP, may be able to disrupt two of the underlying mechanisms of the STPP (Anyon et al., 2014). First, RP has the potential to prevent students from being referred to the discipline office in the first place. With the use of RP, teachers can be empowered to proactively strengthen relationships with students to prevent discipline problems (Thosborne and Blood, 2013). When issues do arise teachers can utilize strategies like affective questions to help them understand the root causes of the perceived misbehavior (Smith et al., 2015). The use of these RP strategies may decrease the likelihood of students from receiving discipline referrals, which would prevent them from being suspended and/or expelled from school (Mallet, 2016). Secondly, this, in turn, has the potential to improve school climates and students' attitudes towards school (Skiba et al., 2014; Thosborne & Blood, 2013). This change of attitude may be able to keep some students from dropping out of school, which is a strong indicator of student's likelihood of becoming involved with the prison system (Skiba et al., 2014).

RP strategies also provide the opportunity for teachers to reframe instances of "misbehavior" as learning opportunities (Costello et al., 2009). Instead of simply referring a student to the discipline office, the use of RP, specifically affective statements and questions, can help students understand how others perceive or are affected by their actions, which can lead to more appropriate behavior in the future (Smith et al., 2015; Thosborne & Blood, 2013).

One of the concerns about implementing RP is the time requirement for the more formal processes. Each formal RP occurrence, such as formal classroom circles and formal conferences, "can consume hours of the school day" (Smith et al., 2015, p. 116).

Amstutz and Mullet (2015) also note that mediation sessions can take 90 to 120 minutes. For the purposes of this action research, though, time constraints should not be an issue because the two strategies being used, affective statements and affective questions, are informal and require only a few minutes to utilize.

A second concern regarding the implementation of RP is the paradigm shift that is required to employ it with fidelity. Schools that are accustomed to the use of exclusionary consequences, and that focus on punishment rather than reconciliation will have difficulty adjusting to a restorative framework that values relationships over rules. To support this paradigm shift educators need training in RP, as well as supportive leaders who also believe in and support the restorative philosophy (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Payne & Welch, 2015; Thosborne & Blood, 2013). For this DiP, the teacher participant has volunteered to learn about RP and to be part of a trial experience. Thus, by volunteering, the teacher has demonstrated a basic openness to the RP paradigm. An orientation to the RP philosophy and use of AS and AQ will also be provided to the teacher before implementing the RP strategies of affective statements and questions.

Addressing student discipline has changed throughout the course of American education. Strict, authoritarian classrooms where corporal punishment was the norm, have given way to a contemporary reliance on exclusionary consequences of suspension and expulsion from school (Butchart, 1995; Losen, 2011). These exclusionary consequences have resulted in negative effects on students including lower academic achievement, more negative perceptions of school climate, and higher risk of dropping out of school (Rausch & Skiba, 2005; Suh & Suh, 2007; Wallace et al., 2008). In

addition, the emergence of zero tolerance policies across the nation has increased the number of students receiving exclusionary consequences and their negative effects (Fabelo et al., 2011; Wallace et al., 2008). Current trends in school discipline also note that African American students tend to receive disproportionately more discipline referrals, but for offenses that are more subjective in nature (Skiba et al., 2002). All of these factors have led to the phenomenon known as the STPP, which postulates that students, particularly minority students, receive more school discipline referrals and exclusionary consequences, and, therefore, are more likely to be put on a pathway that leads to prison (Skiba et al., 2014).

Alternatives to exclusionary consequences, such as RJ and RP, have come to light recently. These approaches offer the use of dialogue and group decision making to prevent and address wrongdoing (Costello et al., 2009). Whole school RP implementation, which includes the use of RJ strategies, has the potential to decrease the use of exclusionary consequences and their harmful effects (Mallet, 2016). This could also offer support to historically disenfranchised subgroups, such as African Americans and those in poverty (Wilson, 2013).

Conclusion

This literature review notes the importance of school and classroom climate. Classroom climate can affect students' academic achievement, physical well-being, and emotional well-being (Smith et al., 2015; Thapa et al., 2013; Koth et al., 2008). Having a positive classroom climate is vital to the success of students, but some teachers struggle to create a positive classroom climate. RP is a framework that has been

suggested to improve school climate (Costello et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2015; Gregory et al., 2016; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).

The language that teachers use can play a pivotal role in how students view and respond to their teachers (Johnston et al., 2011; Sprinkle et al., 2006). In some cases, it may be that the teacher's language is not conducive to building relationships with students. RP strategies, such as affective statements and affective questions, incorporate particular language formats for teachers to use when interacting with students. These specific ways of communicating help teachers express their true feelings to students, while helping students understand how their actions are affecting others (Costello et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2015; Thosborne & Blood, 2013). Thus, by incorporating affective statements and affective questions appropriately teachers may be able to improve the climate of their classrooms, and thereby improve students' academic performance and overall well-being.

The use of RP also exhibit promise when it comes to alleviating the negative effects of exclusionary consequences, particularly for minority students (Mallet, 2016; Wilson, 2013). By offering alternatives to exclusionary consequences, or even by preventing problematic behavior, RP has the potential to decrease the number of students who are suspended or expelled from school, to disrupt the STPP, and to improve school climate as a whole (Anyon et al., 2014; Gregory et al., 2016; Mallet, 2016; Perry & Morris, 2014; Wilson, 2013).

The successful implementation of RP is not easy, though. A paradigm shift must occur in order for schools to focus on relationships rather than rules and to gain the positive impacts that RP can create. This requires leaders who believe in the restorative

philosophy and support the use of RP, as well as training for whole school implementation (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Payne & Welch, 2015; Thosborne & Blood, 2013). Chapter three will describe, in detail, the site, participants, and methodology of this action research.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology that was used in this action research project. The purpose of this action research was to determine if implementing RP in a classroom, particularly affective statements and affective questions, affects the climate of that classroom. Poor classroom climate is exemplified by increased student behavioral problems and low levels of student engagement. Positive classroom climates, on the other hand, have been shown to have positive effects on students' academic performance, classroom engagement, and even students' physical and mental health (Smith et al., 2015; Thapa et al., 2013). The use of RP has been suggested to improve classroom climate (Costello et al., 2009; Gregory et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2015). Affective statements and affective questions are formats for speaking with and questioning students. These are simple but effective RP strategies to implement in a classroom setting (Costello et al., 2009). These types of statements and questions help to build relationships between students and teachers, and they also help students develop a sense of empathy (Smith et al., 2015).

The question grounding this action research was: Will working with a teacher to implement RP, specifically affective statements and questions, in their classroom setting have an effect on the climate of their classroom? Supporting questions, which guided the focus group and teacher interviews were: What are student perceptions on the climate of

the classroom as a result of the use of RP? What were the teacher's perceptions on the implementation of RP in the classroom? What were the teacher's perceptions on the climate of the classroom as a result of RP?

Research Design

This DiP took the form of action research with a concurrent mixed method approach. This section justifies the use of this research design. It also describes the role of the researcher, ethical considerations taken during the course of the research, the research site, the selection of participants, data collection procedures, and how the data will be analyzed.

Action research. Mertler (2014) describes “action research” as a type of research conducted by someone such as a teacher, administrator, or someone who has a “vested interest in the teaching and learning process or environment for the purpose gathering information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how their students learn” (p. 4). This DiP met Mertler's qualifications for action research because I was an administrator who had a vested interest in this particular school, where the research occurred. I worked to address a problem specific to my particular school, which dealt with concerns about classroom management and student discipline, including the increases in the use of administrative referrals. Action research is also an effective way to help classroom teachers improve his/her professional practice and student outcomes (Mertler, 2014). The strategies utilized with this teacher and their students may be used in the future with other teachers in the school to RP in more classrooms. The strategies that were used in this action research can be analyzed, improved, and implemented with other teachers at my school.

Mixed-methods research. This action research utilized a concurrent mixed methods design (Coe, Waring, Hedges, & Arthur, 2017). A mixed-methods design was chosen because the goal is to use triangulation to increase confidence in the study's results (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In the triangulation process both qualitative and quantitative methods were used with the goal of confirming results using multiple means. This can lead to greater confidence in results when findings are corroborated using different methods. If findings differ between approaches then the mixed-methods design can provide more insight when drawing conclusions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Positionality. As an assistant principal at TTMS I was involved in many aspects of the school. One of my duties included handling student discipline issues. I also worked with teachers on instructional issues. In this role I conducted classroom observations, provided feedback to teachers, and helped plan and carry out professional learning. I also worked with parents, teachers, and students to resolve a variety of concerns. Another professional responsibility included taking part in the formal evaluation of teachers.

It was in my role as a school administrator at TTMS that I arrived at the idea for this action research. At the time the discipline system at TTMS was fairly traditional in that it relied heavily on the use of exclusionary consequences such as lunch detentions, in-school suspensions, and out-of-school suspensions. Working with student discipline I often felt that these consequences did not always effectively address the underlying concerns that were contributing to the behavioral concerns that students were exhibiting. I also wondered if teachers could do more at the classroom level to prevent students from

being written up and sent to administration. This is what led me to learn more about RP and alternatives to exclusionary consequences.

As previously described in chapter one, it was during administrative observations that I noticed some classrooms with issues of negative classroom climate. Students were observed being disrespectful to the teacher and other students, and were often not engaged in the learning. However, in other classrooms, where the climate seemed more positive, the same students acted respectfully to their peers and the teacher, and were often engaged in the learning. This caused me to learn more about classroom climate and ways to help teachers improve the climate of their classroom.

Mertler (2014) describes action research as, “research that is done by teachers for themselves” (p. 4). I was not a classroom teacher, but I directly worked with a classroom teacher in my school. Thus, my role in this action research was not that of teacher-researcher, but that of observer-researcher. This role was necessary because I was an assistant principal and did not have a class of my own in which to implement RP strategies. Instead, I worked with a teacher in my school to help him implement RP strategies and to measure the effects on climate in his classroom. In this role, I also introduced the teacher to the philosophy RP and to the strategies of AS and AQ. This orientation process will be described in more detail later in the chapter. In addition to introducing the teacher to RP, I also observed the teacher and provided him feedback regarding his implementation of those strategies in the classroom. We also met periodically to discuss the progress of the action research. This action research project had the potential to improve this particular teacher’s practice and overall classroom

climate. This project can also help the action researcher refine the process for implementing RP in the classrooms of other teachers in the future.

Ethical considerations. While carrying out this action research project I worked with a teacher of whom I am a direct supervisor. It was made very clear that the teacher's participation in this action research project had no bearing on his professional standing; his participation is strictly voluntary. All students in this particular teacher's class experienced the RP being implemented. Since the student participants were under the age of eighteen, permission from students' parents was required to participate in the portions of this action research, specifically the focus group. When parental permission was received, via a parental consent form, the participating students signed an assent form, which noted that they were a minor but agreed to participate in the research (Dana & Yendol-Hoppy, 2014). An informed consent form was also provided to each participant, which described the study and gave details regarding subjects' participation. The methodology for this action research project was approved by the institutional review boards of both my university and school district.

This action research had the potential to benefit all participants, both students and teacher. By implementing RP the teacher had the potential to improve the climate of the classroom. Improved classroom climates could also positively affect the learning that occurred in the classroom as well as the mental and physical health of students in the class (Smith et al., 2015).

Another ethical consideration that was taken during this action research was to protect the privacy of participants (Dana & Yendol-Hoppy, 2014). To accomplish this, pseudonyms were used for the school and the cooperating teacher. Names of students

were not used. In addition, no identifying information was collected from students when they completed classroom climate surveys.

Throughout the action research process I strived, as the action-researcher, to avoid bias. One method used to avoid bias, described by Mertler (2014), was to take time to distance myself from the data and reflect on it. The intent of this reflection was to assist in staying emotionally-neutral regarding the data and findings. For example, while I, personally, may have been in favor of RP as a means of improving classroom climate, I could not allow that to skew my interpretation or reporting of the data collected. If the results did not suggest that RP had a positive impact on the climate of this particular teacher's classroom, then I was obliged to acknowledge that and report it accurately.

Research site. TTMS was a suburban middle school in the Southeastern United States consisting of about 1100 students in grades six through eight. This school was located in a predominantly white, middle-class community. White students accounted for 88% of the student population at this school, while African American students accounted for 4%, Asians 6%, and multiracial 3%. In this particular school, 21% of students received free or reduced-cost lunches. In 2014 TTMS received an absolute rating of "Excellent" and a growth rating of "Excellent". It also received an ESEA rating of "B".

TTMS was a relatively new school, in its sixth year of existence. It was also part of a national school reform network called EL Education. EL Education schools focus on three core areas: mastery of knowledge and skills, character, and high quality work (EL Education, 2015). With student character being a major focus, EL Education provided some guidance on how to do foster character development. According to *EL Education*

Core Practices (2015) the school climate in an EL Education school should be, “characterized by safety, kindness, joy in learning, and positive leadership by staff and students” (p. 64).

Participant selection. During this action research multiple participants were selected for participation. This section will describe how I selected the teacher with whom I worked, the class with which we chose to implement the strategies, and how the students who participated in the focus group were chosen. In addition, I will describe the orientation process used to introduce the cooperating teacher to RP, AS, and AQ.

Teacher selection. I recruited a teacher from TTMS to participate in this action research. I was looking for a teacher who wanted to improve their classroom climate and who was willing to implement new strategies to try to address any climate issues they may be having in their classroom. To make this selection, I sent an email to all teachers at TTMS that explained the research project and asked for a volunteer teacher with whom to work. Interested teachers were asked submit a few paragraphs describing why they wished to participate in this project. Five teachers responded to the email. Of those, two teachers provided explanations of why they desired to be part of the action research. Both of these teachers relayed a desire to improve their classroom performance and a willingness to implement new strategies in the classroom. One of these teachers was a foreign language teacher and the other a science teacher. Since RP rely heavily on the language used with students implementing RP in a foreign language would add an unnecessary level of complexity to the research project. Thus, it was decided to collaborate with the science teacher, Mr. Patrick (a pseudonym).

Mr. Patrick was a white, male, with nineteen years of teaching experience. He taught elementary school for nine years, and has taught middle school for the last ten years. At the time of this action research he was in his second year teaching eighth grade science. Mr. Patrick was always looking for ways to improve his teaching practice. This growth mindset is demonstrated by his post-graduate studies. In addition to a bachelor's degree, Mr. Patrick has earned a master's degree in science curriculum, and while he was participating in this action research he was pursuing a Ph.D. in science teaching and learning.

Orientation process. Once the cooperating teacher was chosen, I provided him an orientation regarding the effective implementation of AS and AQ. I introduced Mr. Patrick to the framework of RP and to the use of affective statements and questions through multiple methods. First, I provided the teacher with reading materials about RP and affective statements and questions. Excerpts from two principal sources were used to introduce Mr. Patrick to RP, AS, and AQ: *Better Than Carrots or Sticks: Restorative Practices for Positive Classroom Management* (Smith et al., 2015) and *The Restorative Practices Handbook for Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators: Building a Culture of Community in Schools* (Costello et al., 2009). These two books were chosen because they describe the foundations of RP, as well as provide practical information regarding the implementation of AS and AQ. I also provided him with an article by Martin (2015), who is a classroom teacher. This article effectively described the implementation of RP from the teacher's perspective. After Mr. Patrick had a chance to read these materials, he and I met to discuss these readings.

Next, I provided the teacher with a computerized instructional module that I created about RP and affective statements and questions. This module was a PowerPoint presentation that explained the theory and benefits of these strategies and also provided practice with these concepts, as well. The information in the module was compiled from a variety of sources: Costello et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2015; and Thosborne and Blood, 2013. The overall learning goals for this module were that users would be able to identify the benefits of RP; identify examples of punitive, restorative, permissive, and neglectful responses to wrongdoing; identify affective statements; and identify the benefits of using affective statements (Costello et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2015; Thosborne & Blood, 2013). Examples of this module can be found below in figures 3.1 and 3.2.

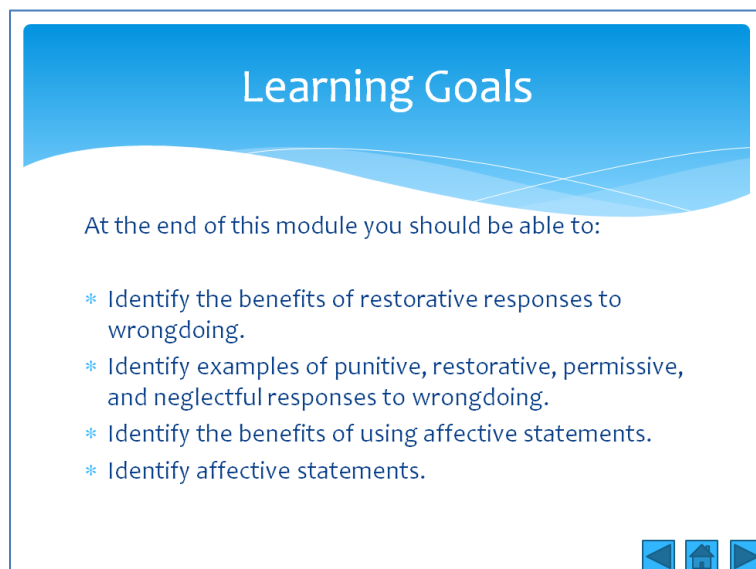


Figure 3.1

Screenshot of the learning goals for the researcher-created module on RP.

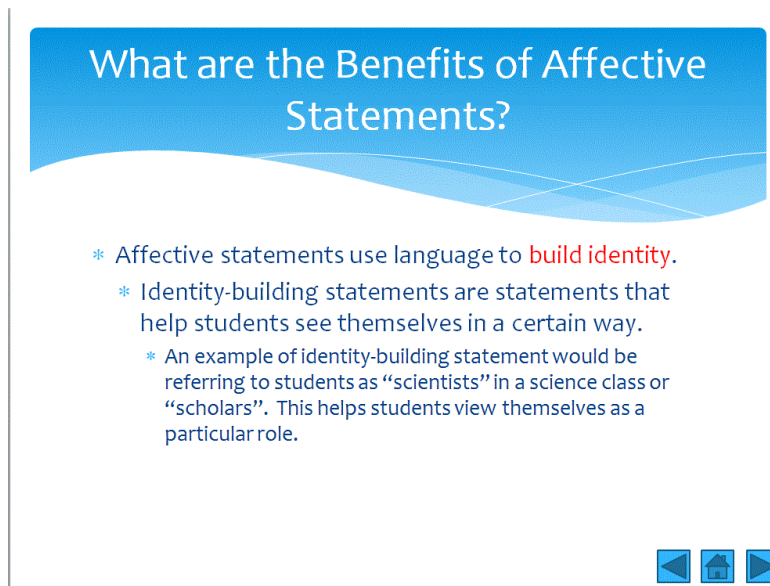


Figure 3.2

Screenshot of a slide about AS from the researcher-created module on RP.

I also observed the teacher implementing these strategies and provided feedback to the teacher regarding this implementation. The teacher was interviewed at the conclusion of this action research project regarding their perceptions of the effectiveness of the RP strategies, as well as the process of learning about and implementing the RP strategies.

Class selection. Mr. Patrick and I chose one of his classes with whom to utilize AS and AQ. We decided to focus on a single class in order to simplify the data analysis for the action research. We chose to work with Mr. Patrick's eighth period Earth science class based on the teacher's perception that this class had the least positive classroom climate, including some students who exhibited challenging behaviors, and therefore, had more room to show improvement in classroom climate. This class consisted of twenty-seven eighth grade students; twelve females and fifteen males. Students in this class were thirteen and fourteen years old. The ethnic breakdown of this class consisted of three

African American students, four students who are more than one ethnicity, and twenty Caucasian students (see table 3.1 below). All twenty-seven students in the class participated in pre- and post-treatment classroom climate surveys.

Table 3.1

Demographic Information of Mr. Patrick's 8th Period Class

	Males	Females	African American	Caucasian	Two or More Races
Number of Students	15	12	3	20	4

Focus group selection. In order to gather more detailed student perceptions of classroom climate and the use of RP, the action researcher assembled a focus group consisting of four of the students from that class. Since this focus group was a small sample of subjects, a purposeful sample was utilized to help reduce bias (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A purposeful sample was selected that aims to encompass diverse perspectives regarding the use of RP and the climate of the classroom. This included students who had exhibited behavioral concerns and student who had not. Additionally, students were chosen to represent diversity regarding gender, race, and academic ability (See table 3.2). The questions that were asked of the focus group can be found in Appendix B.

Data collection methods. As this was a mixed-methods action research project, quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The quantitative data came from questionnaires regarding classroom climate that were administered to the students prior to implementing RP and again, six weeks later, at the conclusion of the implementation window. Following the implementation period the researcher collected qualitative data in

the form of a focus group interview with students and a semi-structured interview with the teacher.

Table 3.2

Demographic Information of Focus Group Participants

Student	Age	Gender	Race	Grade in Mr. Patrick's class at the time of the interview
Student A	14	Male	Black	D
Student B	13	Male	White	B
Student C	14	Female	Black	B
Student D	13	Female	White	A

The researcher chose to utilize a focus group because the time frame for data collection was relatively brief (about 6 weeks), and it would be difficult to interview multiple students individually in that time period. Additionally, the interplay and conversations that may develop among the participants in this focus group may also draw out findings that would have otherwise not been revealed (Morgan, 1996).

The researcher chose a semistructured interview as a data collection tool because it provided the ability to delve deeper into the teacher's perceptions of class climate, RP, and implementation of the specific strategies. Interviews also allow both the researcher and interviewee to ask clarifying questions. This ability for both parties to ask questions should provide richer, clearer responses and understanding (Schwalbach, 2003).

Data collection instruments. Multiple data collection methods were used during this action research, a classroom climate survey, a student focus group interview, and a semi-structured teacher interview. Each of these data collection instruments is described in this section.

Classroom life instrument. The classroom climate survey that was used was the Classroom Life Instrument (CLI). The CLI was described by Johnson, Johnson, and Anderson (1983). This survey consisted of 59 Likert-type questions whose responses are “Never True,” “Rarely True,” “Sometimes True,” “Mostly True,” and “Always True.” The action researcher used the questions described by Johnson et al. (1983) to create a digital version that students completed on their school-issued iPads. The following are examples of questions that are included in the CLI (All survey questions are available in Appendix A):

- In this class other students care about my feelings.
- My teacher really cares about me.
- In this class other students like to help me learn.
- I often get discouraged in school.
- In this class if a student works hard, he/she can definitely succeed.

(Johnson et al., 1983)

Voight and Hanson (2012) noted that the CLI is intended to be utilized at the classroom level, and that it continues to be a scale used by researchers. The questions in this survey fell into one of the following twelve categories: cooperative learning, positive goal interdependence, resource interdependence, teacher academic support, teacher personal support, student academic support, student personal support, class cohesion, academic self-esteem, fairness in grading, achieving for social approval, and alienation (Johnson et al., 1983).

Student focus group. The focus group consisted of four students, whose selection has been previously described. Examples of questions for the focus group include, “Do

you like this class? Why or why not?”, “Do you think Mr. Patrick cares about you? Why or why not?”, and “What do you think when your teacher uses affective statements and says something like, ‘I feel frustrated when you interrupt me’ or ‘It makes me proud to see you working to revise your paper?’”. The questions for the focus group were pilot tested on other educators, who provided feedback that improved the clarity of the questions and helped to state the questions using more student-friendly language. The focus group questions can be found in Appendix B.

Teacher interview. The teacher interview was semi-structured. I began with some basic questions from which to start, however follow-up and clarifying questions developed as the interview proceeded (Schwalbach, 2003). This structure also allowed for the interview to follow the flow of conversation. Examples of questions for the semi-structured interview include, “Do you feel the climate of the classroom changed as you implemented RP?”, “Give examples of how you used RP in your class,” and “Would you recommend using this practice to another teacher? Why or why not?” See Appendix C for a full list of the semi structured interview questions. The questions for the teacher interview were pilot tested with other educators, who were not involved in this study. They provided feedback that made the questions clearer. Their feedback also assisted in taking general questions and making them into more probing questions.

Data analysis. Since this action research utilized mixed methods design a variety of quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were implemented.

Quantitative analysis. The CLI, a survey, was the quantitative measure used in this action research. This 59-item Likert-like survey utilized a 5-point truth scale. Students’ responses were converted to numerals: never true = 1, rarely true = 2,

sometimes true = 3, mostly true = 4, and always true = 5. Scores for each of the twelve scales were tabulated for each of the twenty-seven students on the pre-test and the post-test. The pre-test and post-test scores for each scale were then compared for significant changes using independent samples t-tests.

No identifying information was collected from students when they completed the CLI surveys in order to provide anonymity so that students would be as honest as possible with their responses. The use of a paired-samples t-test is ideal for pre- and post-test analysis of paired data (Mertler, 2014). However, since there was no identifying information collected (i.e., the data were unpaired) it was not possible to track pre- and post-survey results by student, so paired-samples t-tests could not be utilized in this situation. When data are unpaired and on a continuous scale independent t-tests are acceptable to use in lieu of paired-samples t-tests (Kent State University, 2018). Thus, independent samples t-tests were conducted for each of the twelve scales measured in the CLI to determine if there were significant changes after the implementation of RP.

This is similar to the analysis technique implemented by Ghaith's (2003) study of the relationship between forms of instruction, achievement, and students' perception of classroom climate. In his study he utilized the CLI to survey students regarding their perceptions of classroom climate. He analyzed the CLI data using descriptive statistics as well as other statistical tests of significance.

Qualitative analysis. Both the teacher and the student focus group interviews were video recorded using an iPad. This audio file was then transcribed using an online transcription service. The transcripts were read and key words, phrases, and ideas were coded using NVivo software. These coded sections were then put into categories to

identify patterns. Finally, these patterns were organized into overarching themes (Saldana, 2009).

Trustworthiness. The validity of qualitative research is increased if the research methods are trustworthy (Mertler, 2014). What makes qualitative research trustworthy? Shenton (2004) contends that credibility is a major criterion of trustworthiness.

Credibility refers to the idea that the study is truly measuring what is intended. One means of increasing credibility is to utilize well-established methods (Shenton, 2004). This is achieved in this action research project by using the CLI which is a tool for measuring classroom climate that has been documented in educational literature (Ghaith, 2003; Johnson et al., 1983; Voight & Hanson, 2012). The CLI measures twelve scales, or dimensions, of classroom climate. Johnson et al. (1983) report the following Cronbach alpha reliability scores for each scale of the CLI: Cooperative learning, .83; positive goal interdependence, .61; resource interdependence, .74; teacher academic support, .78; teacher personal support, .80; student academic support, .67; student personal support, .78; class cohesion, .51; fairness of grading, .61; achieving for social approval, .72; academic self-esteem, .61; and alienation, .68.

Triangulation is another means of increasing the credibility of qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). The teacher interview and student focus group were used as sources for triangulation in this action research. While the surveys and focus group reflected the students' perspectives, the interview elucidated the teacher's perspective of RP implementation and classroom climate. The teacher interview was analyzed to determine whether the major themes agree or disagree with major themes found in the survey data

and focus group data from students. By comparing these three data sets, or triangulating, the credibility and the trustworthiness of the results are increased (Shenton, 2004).

Conclusion

Classroom climate is an important factor that impacts students in a variety of ways. It can positively or negatively affect their academic success as well as their physical and mental health (Koth et al., 2008; Thapa et al., 2013). A negative classroom climate can be difficult to change, though. RP such as affective statements and affective questions, however, have the potential to improve classroom climate (Costello et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2015; Gregory et al., 2016).

I worked with a teacher to effectively implement specific RP, affective statements and affective questions, in his class. Classroom climate surveys, the CLI, were administered to the teacher's class prior to implementing RPs and after the implementation period ended. This allowed the researcher to gauge if there was a noticeable difference in classroom climate before and after the implementation of AS and AQ.

In addition to the quantitative data gathered from the surveys, qualitative data was gathered, as well. Following the implementation period a focus group was conducted with a select group of students. This group of students was purposefully chosen to represent a diversity of opinions regarding classroom climate and the use of affective statements and questions. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the teacher at the conclusion of the project. These sources provided qualitative data regarding the classroom climate and the implementation of RP to elucidate any effects implementing the RP may have had.

This concurrent mixed-methods design, which incorporated quantitative data, CLI surveys, and qualitative data, a focus group and teacher interview, was preferred because it allowed for triangulation of data. This triangulation of data provided greater levels of trustworthiness in the results of the action research (Shenton, 2004). The results and interpretation of this action research will be discussed in chapter four.

Chapter Four

Findings

The goal of this action research was to implement RP strategies, specifically affective statements and affective questions, in the classroom setting and to measure the effects on classroom climate. A cooperating teacher, who volunteered for the study, was selected, and was provided with a training module, designed by the action researcher, and several articles about RP, affective statements, and affective questions. The researcher also observed the teacher during the implementation window and debriefed with the teacher about RP.

This action research utilized a mixed methods design. Quantitative data regarding classroom climate was collected using the Classroom Life Instrument (CLI). This 59 question, Likert-like survey was administered to the students in the selected class prior to implementation of RP and then again after six weeks of RP implementation. This survey measured twelve scales within classroom climate. Each scale measured by the CLI was determined by averaging the results of a combination of four to eleven individual questions from the survey. The methodology described by Johnson et al. (1983) was followed to match individual questions to each respective scale. See Appendix D for the description of which survey questions were used for each scale. Descriptive statistics were calculated between the pre- and post-tests for these scales. In addition, independent

samples t-tests were conducted to determine significance of pre- and post-implementation CLI scores.

In addition to the CLI, qualitative data was collected in the form of a student focus group and a semi-structured interview with the teacher following the implementation window.

This chapter will describe the results and interpretations of my action research, implementing RP to improve classroom climate. The results of each instrument, CLI, focus group, and teacher interview, will be described.

CLI Results

There were twelve scales, or dimensions of classroom climate, measured by the CLI. The scales measured by the CLI were:

1. Cooperative learning.
2. Positive goal interdependence.
3. Resource interdependence.
4. Teacher academic support.
5. Teacher personal support.
6. Student academic support.
7. Student personal support.
8. Class cohesion.
9. Fairness of grading.
10. Achieving for social approval.
11. Academic self-esteem.
12. Alienation.

The possible survey responses for students were: never true, rarely true, sometimes true, mostly true, and always true. For analysis purposes, students' responses were converted to numerals: never true = 1, rarely true = 2, sometimes true = 3, mostly true = 4, and always true = 5. Scores for each of the twelve scales were calculated for each of the twenty-seven students on the pre-survey, as well as the post-survey. This resulted in twenty-seven scores for each respective scale on the pre-survey and the post-survey. Independent samples t-tests were conducted for each of the twelve scales on the CLI to determine if there were significant differences in these dimensions of classroom climate before and after the implementation of RP. The pre- and post-test mean scores for each scale are described next.

1. Cooperative learning describes students as having a positive attitude toward working cooperatively with other students (Johnson, Johnson, Buckman, & Richards, 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.67$) and post-test scores ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.66$) for the cooperative learning scale, $t(52) = 0.44$, $p = 0.66$. The mean scores for cooperative learning were in the "sometimes true" to "mostly true" range.
2. Positive goal interdependence refers to students' perceptions of having common outcomes and being sure that everyone learns the assigned material (Johnson et al., 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.72$) and post-test scores ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.76$) for the positive goal interdependence scale, $t(52) = -0.29$, $p = 0.77$. The mean scores for positive goal interdependence were in the "sometimes true" to "mostly true" range.

3. Resource interdependence is a measure of students' perceptions of willingness to share materials (Johnson et al., 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.84$) and post-test scores ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.60$) for the resource interdependence scale, $t(52) = 0.22$, $p = 0.82$. The mean scores for resource interdependence were in the "sometimes true" to "mostly true" range.
4. Teacher academic support is a scale that measures students' perception that the teacher cares about how much they learn and wants to help them learn (Johnson et al., 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 0.46$) and post-test scores ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.54$) for the teacher academic support scale, $t(52) = 1.69$, $p = 0.10$. While there was a decrease in mean score from pre- to post-implementation, this was still the highest score for any scale on the post-test. The mean scores for teacher academic support were in the "mostly true" range.
5. Teacher personal support measures the belief that the teacher cares about the student as a person (Johnson et al., 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.81$) and post-test scores ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.89$) for the teacher personal support scale, $t(52) = 0.83$, $p = 0.40$. The mean scores for teacher personal support were in or very close to the "mostly true" range.
6. Student academic support refers to the belief that other students in the class care about how much a student learn and want to help them learn (Johnson et al., 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 3.36$, $SD =$

- 0.80) and post-test scores ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.69$) for the student academic support scale, $t(52) = -1.64$, $p = 0.11$. This increase of 0.33 was the largest mean score gain for any of the twelve scales. The mean scores for student academic support were in the “sometimes true” range.
7. Student personal support describes the perception that other students like and care about the student as a person (Johnson et al., 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.64$) and post-test scores ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.69$) for the student personal support scale, $t(52) = 0.12$, $p = 0.90$. The mean scores for student personal support were in or very close to the “sometimes true” range.
 8. Class cohesion is the belief that students in the class like each other (Johnson et al., 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.64$) and post-test scores ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.55$) for the class cohesion scale, $t(52) = -0.59$, $p = 0.56$. Mean scores for class cohesion were in the “sometimes true” range.
 9. Fairness of grading refers to the perception that students get the grades they deserve and can be successful if they work hard (Johnson et al., 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.61$) and post-test scores ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.63$) for the fairness of grading scale, $t(52) = -0.35$, $p = 0.73$. Mean scores for class cohesion were in the “mostly true” range. This scale had the second highest post-test mean score.
 10. Achieving for social approval is the belief that a student achieves in order to gain approval from others, such as peers, teacher, and/or parents (Johnson et al., 1985).

There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 0.99$) and post-test scores ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.79$) for the achieving for social approval scale, $t(52) = -0.27$, $p = 0.79$. The mean scores for achieving for social approval were in the “rarely true” to “sometimes true” range.

11. Academic self-esteem describes a student’s belief that they are a good student and are successfully learning (Johnson et al., 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.57$) and post-test scores ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.70$) for the academic self-esteem scale, $t(52) = 1.42$, $p = 0.16$. Mean scores for academic self-esteem were in the “sometimes true” range.
12. Alienation is a student’s belief that they are not a valued part of the school, peer groups, or classroom activities (Johnson et al., 1985). There was no significant difference between the pre-test ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 0.46$) and post-test scores ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.64$) for the alienation scale, $t(52) = -0.78$, $p = 0.44$. This scale is the only one that represents a negative trait, and, so, it was reverse scored. That means that higher scores on this scale are not desirable because they represent increased signs of student alienation. Mean scores for academic self-esteem were in the “rarely true” range. This indicates that most of the students in the classroom felt that they were a part of the classroom environment.

The mean scores for each of the twelve scales for the pre-test and the post-test are displayed in the Table 1 below.

Table 4.1

Mean Responses to CLI Before and After the Implementation of RP

Scale	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Difference
Cooperative Learning	3.90	3.83	-0.07
Positive Goal Interdependence	3.57	3.63	0.06
Resource Interdependence	3.71	3.67	-0.04
Teacher Academic Support	4.68	4.44	-0.24
Teacher Personal Support	4.12	3.93	-0.19
Student Academic Support	3.36	3.69	0.33
Student Personal Support	3.24	3.22	-0.02
Class Cohesion	3.44	3.54	0.10
Fairness of Grading	4.24	4.30	0.06
Achieving for Social Approval	2.90	2.96	0.06
Academic Self-Esteem	3.59	3.34	-0.25
Alienation	2.40	2.52	0.12

Overall, there were no significant differences in classroom climate, as measured by the CLI, after the implementation of RP. Over half of the scales had relatively high mean post-test scores. Eight scales had post-test means above 3.5 and two of the scales had mean post-test scores above 4.0 (out of 5.0). Although these scores indicate relatively positive classroom climate, these scores were not significantly different from the pre-test scores. No scales showed statistically significant changes as a result of the use of RP. Student academic support was the scale with the highest increase in mean score after the implementation of RP, with an average increase of 0.33, however, this was not a statistically significant increase.

The scale for teacher academic support had a notable decrease in mean score after the implementation of RP, but it was not a statistically significant drop. It should be noted, though, that this scale had the highest mean scores, both pre- and post-implementation. Beginning with a high pre-test mean of 4.68 out of 5.00 could be difficult to maintain and certainly difficult to increase. Thus, even though this scale did decrease after RP, teacher academic support is still an area of strength regarding the climate in this particular class.

The CLI indicated no statistically significant changes in classroom climate on any of the scales measured by this survey. Possible explanations for this are discussed in the “Triangulation of Findings” at the end of this chapter and in chapter five.

Focus Group

The purpose of the focus group was to elucidate the effects of the RP strategies from the student perspective. Four students were selected to participate in the focus group. These four students were chosen in collaboration with Mr. Patrick to represent a diverse cross-section of the class, based on ethnicity, sex, and academic achievement. This group consisted of an African American female, a white female, an African American male, and a white male. Current quarterly averages of the focus group participants ranged from “D” to “A”. The focus group interview was video recorded using an iPad. The recordings were then transcribed by an online service. Key words and phrases in the transcriptions were coded using NVivo software. The coded data were then categorized to identify patterns. These patterns of coded data were then organized into overarching themes (Saldana, 2009).

Two overarching themes emerged from the focus group: strong relationships and enhanced teaching and learning. These themes are also components of classroom climate (Thapa et al., 2013). While speaking with students in the focus group it was noted that they were not familiar with the term “restorative practices” because the teacher had not explicitly discussed this concept that was being implemented. However, the effects of RP can be detected in their perceptions of relationships and academic support in Mr. Patrick’s classroom.

Strong relationships. The students in the focus group repeatedly discussed issues relating to relationships in the classroom. This included relationships among students as well as students’ relationship with Mr. Patrick. It was evident that, overall, there were positive student-student and student-teacher relationships in this class. Students indicated a clear notion that Mr. Patrick cared about them as people. They also noted a strong sense that students in the class cared about the academic success of each other. It seems that relationships in Mr. Patrick’s class were relatively strong from the beginning of the year, compared to students’ experiences in other classes, but the use of RP may have enhanced these relationships even more.

The students all described Mr. Patrick’s class as feeling like a family. When asked how students in Mr. Patrick’s class get along with each other compared to other classes, students indicated that peer relationships are stronger in Mr. Patrick’s class. One student in the focus group responded, “I’d say above average. We’re not all best friends, but we’re all friends.” It was noted that Mr. Patrick provides opportunities for students to discuss their lives outside of the classroom, particularly during an activity called “circle up” that takes place at the beginning of class. Student relationships are not just social,

though, they are also enhanced as students work together on academic assignments. “We all collaborate and get along more than we would in others [classes],” one student noted. Another student commented that, “[Collaboration] makes [academic work] better. It makes it like you can do your best 'cause everyone cares in that class and it's not like they're all there for just them. They are there for you and them.”

Strong student-teacher relationships were also described by the focus group. Participants noted that they felt that Mr. Patrick really cared about them. A major means of building this sense of caring was listening. The students described instances where Mr. Patrick took time to listen to their concerns, both academic and non-academic. One student described how he had been having a bad day, and Mr. Patrick pulled him aside for a private conversation to discuss what was bothering him. The student shared, “That helped me be happy the rest of the day.” The students also discussed how they felt that Mr. Patrick trusted them more than other teachers did. They sensed that Mr. Patrick was not constantly trying to catch them doing something wrong. One student commented on how that sense of trust caused him to make good choices and not play games on his iPad, “Ever since I realized how much he like trusts us and cares about us, I don't really play games in his class because I've gotten to know that he trusts us and I don't wanna loose that trust.” One student in the focus group was in a unique situation because she had also had Mr. Patrick as her science teacher two years previously in sixth grade. She described that there was more of a positive family feel to his classroom this year, “I had him in 6th grade. I feel like the atmosphere of the class in general changed [since] 6th grade. Like the first day [of 8th grade], his class just seemed more welcoming.”

While there are strong student-teacher relationships in Mr. Patrick's class. There are still some instances when he has to address student behavior, primarily blurting out or having side conversations. When this occurs Mr. Patrick typically speaks with students individually. One of the participants had such a conversation with Mr. Patrick before and noted, "It's not demeaning."

Enhanced teaching and learning. A second theme that emerged from the focus group dealt with teaching and learning in Mr. Patrick's class. Mr. Patrick's teaching practices communicated to students that he cared about each of them as a learner, and he wanted to do all he could to help them master the material. This communication of care accompanied with the use of specific academic feedback enhanced the teaching practices that were already a part of Mr. Patrick's repertoire. The recognition of care and reception of feedback also enhanced students' learning in Mr. Patrick's class.

Multiple students noted that he regularly checks in on them while they are working to be sure that they are on track. One student described this process, "He always comes up and checks on us, like, are we doing our work, makes sure we understand everything, if we need help." Another student explained how he asked Mr. Patrick for some more time to complete an assignment, "I asked him, 'Mine's not that high quality. Could I work on it over the break and bring it in?' And he was totally fine with it." This showed that Mr. Patrick wanted the student to produce high quality work, and, so, he was willing to work with the student and provide him additional time to improve his assignment.

In addition to regularly checking on students' progress and working flexibly with students to get assignments completed, it was noted that Mr. Patrick gives high quality

feedback to his students. The focus group participants expressed that they appreciate how specific Mr. Patrick's feedback is so that they know exactly what needs to be improved in their work. They also noted that they do not get this level of specific feedback from all of their teachers. One student gave an example of the difference between other teachers' feedback and Mr. Patrick's feedback, "Some of our teachers are pretty vague about what we have to do...they'll say, 'All you have to do is improve.' He'll tell me the sentence I have to improve or what the topic I have to improve." This type of specific feedback is an example of an agency-building statement, which is one form of affective statements, which provides students with the confidence to move forward (Smith et al., 2015).

The evidence from the focus group suggests that students in Mr. Patrick's class feel that the relationships in his class, both student-student and student-teacher, are quite strong. This seems to be somewhat different from their experiences in other classes. They also described how their learning in his class is enhanced by his genuine concern about their academic work and by his use of specific feedback.

Teacher Interview

A semi-structured interview was conducted with Mr. Patrick following six weeks of RP implementation in his class. Mr. Patrick is a veteran teacher, with nineteen years of teaching experience. He taught elementary school for nine years, and has taught middle school for the last ten years. Mr. Patrick possesses a growth mindset and is always looking for ways to improve his teaching practice. This growth mindset is demonstrated by his post-graduate studies. In addition to a bachelor's degree, Mr. Patrick has earned a master's degree in science curriculum, and he is currently pursuing a Ph.D.

in science teaching and learning. Mr. Patrick is very open to trying new strategies in the classroom, which is why he was chosen for this action research.

During the interview with Mr. Patrick two themes surfaced regarding the effects of RP, a paradigm shift in classroom management and improved communication. Each of these themes will be discussed below.

Paradigm shift in classroom management. Throughout the interview Mr. Patrick commented on how using RP was very different from what he experienced as a student and how he has handled classroom management in the past. Implementing RP represented a paradigm shift for Mr. Patrick regarding his mindset with addressing student behaviors.

Mr. Patrick described his background saying, “In the country, it was just very different with discipline.” He went on to describe his previous paradigm regarding discipline, “I had that mindset where you get yelled at, you move forward, and then you don't repeat that behavior supposedly. But we didn't have conversations.” Mr. Patrick continued to compare RP to his prior models for classroom management, “I was...very blunt...the way I was raised myself. I was quick to just, I feel like, lashing [sic] out instead of trying to understand or really take time to communicate what they were doing and how it impacted me.”

The two RP strategies that were enacted in this action research were affective statements and affective questions. These were new tools for Mr. Patrick to use with students in his class. Mr. Patrick noted that he had more opportunities to implement affective statements than he did to utilize affective questions. He did describe one incident, though, of using the questions with students who were upset:

With those questions, I did use some of [affective questions] in a situation that ... not to the point that I wanted to, because this was more of a personal thing that happened between [a student] and someone else, but I felt like that aided us in getting the discussion to where he was the focus. It took down a big wall.

Facilitating this type of discussion with a student was new territory for Mr. Patrick. He shared that he did not want the students to think that he was probing or intruding into their personal business by using RP to help address concerns with their peers. However, Mr. Patrick found out that the student actually appreciated his help in solving this problem. When Mr. Patrick asked if the student minded him asking how he was doing the student replied, “I don't mind that. I like it when you ask me.”

This paradigm shift in classroom management also caused Mr. Patrick to become more thoughtful when addressing student issues. “Instead of being so quick and volatile, you really have to think, ‘Okay, how is this behavior really...affecting me?’ ... You know, weighing out what's worth it and what's not.” This consideration helped Mr. Patrick to “pick his battles” when it came to student behavioral concerns, and not be “nit-picky” about every little thing a student may do.

Using AS and AQ were not strategies that came naturally to Mr. Patrick. However, he was open to trying new strategies and found that they had benefits that he had not anticipated. As the interview concluded Mr. Patrick made one more comment alluding to this paradigm shift, “So many of us were born in the '60s and '70s, and it's just a very different time period, and so this is a great opportunity.”

Improved communication. During the interview, another theme that emerged was that the use of RP improved Mr. Patrick’s communication, both personal and

academic, with his students. This includes providing feedback to students, as well as listening to students. Mr. Patrick stated that communication was one of the most significant aspects of his classroom climate that changed as a result of implementing RP.

Feedback involves providing information to students about their behavior and their academic work. By providing feedback to students about their behavior, they begin to realize how their actions are affecting others. This can help build empathy in students (Flannery, 2014; Smith et al., 2015).

Mr. Patrick described how using RP helped him give students useful feedback about their behavior. Before RP, “I was quick to send a student to ISS (in-school suspension). I was very reactive.” When using affective statements, though, instead of reacting to student behaviors Mr. Patrick stated that he, “Communicat[ed] how [the students’] behaviors were impacting me.” Mr. Patrick provided an example of this:

[The students] don't really understand how their behavior is affecting the instruction or how much time [teachers] use in planning, so that's what I'm trying to [get them to understand] ... that you did spend time on this lesson, and it means a lot to you.

Mr. Patrick adapted his classroom management style from simply telling a student to “be quiet” to helping them understand how their blurting out was affecting others, as well as himself. This specific feedback can help students make changes in their behavior and become more empathetic (Costello et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2015).

Mr. Patrick also described how giving specific feedback to students, academically, has been beneficial. He shared, “My focus...was working on the revision process for high quality work. ... I looked back at some of the past papers that I've

graded, and I felt like they can't grow if they don't understand what we're looking for.”

Providing specific feedback to students is an agency-building statement, which is a type of AS. Thus, Mr. Patrick utilized AS not just for behavioral issues, but for academic feedback, as well.

Listening was another powerful component of RP. Mr. Patrick noticed differences in how students responded to RP as opposed to previous methods of addressing behavioral issues. Mr. Patrick shared how students responded when he began using RP:

Their response was just sort of like expecting a yell, and I think they've almost become numb to the yelling...But now, I think when I first started really doing [RP], they'd just sort of look at me like, ‘You're not going to yell at me?’ And then we had a one-on-one conversation.

Listening was a component of RP that Mr. Patrick noted was incredibly powerful. Giving students an opportunity to speak and actually listening to their responses was a different strategy than Mr. Patrick had previously routinely used. By using these strategies students realize that, “As adults, we do listen, and I think that's their biggest ... Or, that's one of the biggest ah-ha moments for me, is they do see that we listen.” Mr. Patrick asserts that by listening to students, “They see that we do genuinely care.”

The students in Mr. Patrick’s class realized the power of communication in RP strategies. Mr. Patrick shared how they actually began using the language of affective statements with him. He described a time that he told a student that the got something wrong. The student then used affective language with Mr. Patrick by saying, “Mr. Patrick, you sort of made me feel uncomfortable when you asked me that in that tone. I

felt like something was wrong...so if you were to say it this way.” Mr. Patrick noted that this has happened on multiple occasions. The fact that students are adopting this language in their daily interactions illustrates how powerful this communication tool can be.

Triangulation of Findings

The overarching research question for this action research is: Will implementing the RP strategies of affective statements and affective questions have an effect on the climate of that classroom? There were also research questions for the focus group and the teacher interview, which served to add richness to the quantitative data obtained from the CLI (Schwallbach, 2003). The research question for the focus group is: What are student perceptions on the climate of the classroom as a result of the use of RP? The research questions for the teacher interview were: What were the teacher’s perceptions on the implementation of RP in the classroom and what were the teacher’s perceptions on the climate of the classroom as a result of RP?

To answer the overarching research question, yes, the data from this study suggests that the use of RP, specifically AS and AQ, may have some effect on classroom climate. However, the effects of RP on classroom climate are not totally clear.

A concurrent mixed-method design was used for this study so that there could be a triangulation of data to provide an element of reliability for the results (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). There was a high degree of congruence between the teacher’s and students’ perceptions of classroom climate after the implementation of RP. They all agreed that the class had a family feel. There was an emphasis from students and the teacher on providing specific academic feedback for students. There was also agreement

among the focus group and teacher regarding a high level of care being expressed between the teacher and students. This corroborates findings by Gregory et al. (2014), who found an increase in students' perception of teacher care as a result of RP. This caring relationship between teacher and students is a key component to creating a positive classroom climate (Ambrosetti et al., 2009).

The CLI results indicated no statistically significant changes in any dimension of classroom climate as a result of RP. In this action research study the qualitative data and quantitative data did not corroborate one another. The qualitative data suggests that there were positive attributes regarding classroom climate after using AQ and AS, but the survey data do not reflect these changes.

Trends in the classroom that were noticed in the student and teacher interviews were not supported by the CLI results. For example, there was a non-statistically significant decrease in the mean score teacher academic support from pre- to post-implementation surveys. However, students in the focus group praised Mr. Patrick for his specific academic feedback, and Mr. Patrick, himself, described his efforts to provide students with clear feedback on their work. Mean scores for teacher academic support on the CLI may have been lower after RP implementation because the initial score was quite high, 4.68 out of 5.00, and a score that high could be difficult to improve upon. Kane, Lloyd, McCluskey, Maguire, Ridell, Stead, and Weedon (2009) studied how Scottish schools' existing ethos impacted their implementation of RP. They concluded that in schools that started with an overall positive ethos, "RP were a means of giving coherence and identity to established good practices and of further enhancing those practices" (p. 248). This applies to Mr. Patrick's class, which started with a strong ethos of teacher

academic support. The CLI did not indicate that RP improved this aspect of Mr. Patrick's class, but the qualitative data suggests that teacher academic support was strong, and the use of AQ and AS did seem to help Mr. Patrick improve upon practices, such as academic feedback, that were already part of his teaching practice.

Another scale whose mean scores declined, but not significantly, from pre- to post-survey was teacher personal support. This was contrary to the findings of Gregory et al. (2016), who found that increased use of RP by teachers was associated with stronger student perceptions of student-teacher relationships. Although teacher personal support declined when measured by the CLI, it was described as a strength by the focus group. Multiple students described how Mr. Patrick exhibited personal care for them and other students in the class. There are possible explanations for this discrepancy. It may be possible that a few students in the class were upset with the teacher on this particular day, and so the scores for teacher personal support could be lower. Teven and McCroskey (1997) found that students' perception of teacher care greatly affected how students rated teachers on evaluations. Thus, if a few students in the class felt that the teacher did not care about them, due to a recent incident, then it is likely their evaluations of the teacher would be lower. The same twenty-seven students took the pre- and post-tests. However, students' names were not associated with the results. This anonymity was provided to encourage students to be honest, however, individual results cannot be tracked between pre- and post-tests. Thus, it is not possible to conclude if a few specific students' scores for teacher personal support decreased dramatically because of isolated incidents in the class, such as being disciplined.

One possibility for some of the discrepancies in qualitative versus quantitative findings could be a reflection of differences between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The CLI, a quantitative instrument, is limited regarding the information that can be gleaned from it. While the CLI did provide beneficial information, it did not elucidate some aspects of classroom climate that may be pertinent to RP such as the specificity of teacher feedback and how teachers address student misbehavior, which emerged from the qualitative sources. Because of their focused nature, some quantitative instruments may miss out on phenomena that are occurring in a particular environment (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). For example, the CLI survey can only provide information based on the questions that were asked. Since there were no questions on the survey about teacher feedback or addressing misbehavior no quantitative data on those topics was available. Qualitative instruments such as the focus group and semi-structured teacher interview, on the other hand, tend to be more open-ended and exploratory in nature than quantitative instruments (Mertler, 2014). They may uncover phenomena that the researcher did not anticipate prior to beginning the study. For example, the qualitative data in this action research exposed themes involving teacher feedback and students' perceptions of being listened to, whereas the quantitative instruments were not set up to detect these topics.

Another possibility for the discrepancies in the CLI data versus the teacher interview and focus group could have to do with the research design. My focus group consisted of four students out of a class of twenty-seven, which is 15% of the class. Had my focus group been slightly larger, or if I had conducted an additional focus group with

different students, other viewpoints regarding teacher academic support and teacher personal support may have surfaced (Morgan, 1996).

Additionally, the timing of the focus group and teacher interviews may have affected the results of this action research. Having only one interview and focus group that occurred after the implementation of RP may not have provided an accurate depiction of the effects of RP on classroom climate. Perhaps the views that were expressed during the focus group and interview were more reflective of Mr. Patrick's typical teaching style before the use of RP. If I had conducted an introductory teacher interview and student focus group, as well as post-intervention interview and focus group, then I could have compared the pre-and post-interviews to identify differences after the implementation of RP. This longitudinal use of focus groups has been used in other disciplines to obtain qualitative insights into changes as a result of an intervention (Grey, Schmieder-Gaite, Jiang, Nascimento, & Poortinga, 2017).

The lack of congruence between the qualitative and quantitative data may also have to do with the relatively short implementation period. The practices of AS and AQ were implemented for six weeks in Mr. Patrick's class. This is a relatively brief implementation period. Other studies investigating the effects of RP often have longer implementation windows that are measured in years rather than weeks (Kane et al., 2009; McCluskey et al., 2008). Thus, it may take longer than six weeks of implementation to realize statistically significant differences in classroom climate as a result of using AS and AQ.

Finally, the statistical methodology used in this action research may have also contributed to the lack of quantitative significance after the implementation of AS and

AQ. If identifying information had been collected from survey respondents, then a paired-sample t-test could have been used. As a result of not having paired data, however, independent samples t-tests were used instead of paired-samples t-tests (Kent State University, 2018) to analyze statistical significance. Independent samples t-tests have less statistical power in this pre- and post-test design, than do paired-samples t-tests. So, the independent t-test may have not been as sensitive as the paired t-test to detect statistical significance for a typical before and after scenario (Stone, Scibilia, Pammer, Steele, & Keller, 2018).

Conclusion

The aim of this action research was to determine the effects that the use of RP, particularly AS and AQ, would have on classroom climate. The results were varied. Quantitative and qualitative results did not corroborate one another.

Qualitative results suggested that teacher academic support was high, but survey results indicated that it actually decreased (although it was still relatively high) after the implementation of AS and AQ. A similar trend was also seen for teacher personal support. Qualitative results indicated that students' level of cooperative learning was high, but quantitative results noted no significant change after RP implementation. While the quantitative measure may have indicated decreases in some areas after the implementation of RP, the qualitative measures did not corroborate this information.

Looking at the whole picture, it seems that the use of AS and AQ have some positive effects on classroom climate as evidenced by qualitative results. However, quantitative measures did not corroborate these findings. Implications for the use of RP

and their effects of classroom climate, as well as future research, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Chapter Five

Implications and Recommendations

This chapter begins with a review of the purpose of this DiP, driving questions, methodology, and findings of this action research. This is followed by the action plan. Classroom and social justice implications of this action research, as well as implications for future research are then discussed. The chapter concludes with limitations of this action research.

Review of Purpose

The problem of practice for this DiP is that some classrooms at TTMS seem to be suffering from student behavior issues and negative classroom climate. This has been evidenced by classroom observations, as well as conversations with teachers, students, and parents. In some situations students have not been respectful of the teacher or their classmates. This has caused some students to be reluctant to engage fully in classroom activities. The climate of a classroom can have significant impacts on students' academic performance, mental well-being, and physical well-being (Koth et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2015; Thapa et al., 2013). The use of RP has been suggested to improve classroom climate (Costello et al., 2009; Gregory et al., 2016; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Smith et al., 2015). Thus, the purpose of this action research was to implement RP in the classroom setting, specifically affective statements and affective questions, to determine if there were changes in classroom climate. The overarching research question grounding this action research was: Will implementing RP, specifically affective statements and

questions, in their classroom setting have an effect on the climate of the classroom?

There were research questions, too, that guided, specifically, the focus group interview with students and the semi structured interview with the teacher. Those questions were:

What are student perceptions on the climate of the classroom as a result of the use of RP?

What were the teacher's perceptions on the implementation of RP in the classroom? and

what were the teacher's perceptions on the climate of the classroom as a result of RP?

Review of Methodology

This action research was conducted at TTMS, a suburban middle school in the southeastern United States. At the time the research was conducted TTMS had a population of about 1100 students. The student population ethnic breakdown was: 76% white, 9% African American, 7% Asian, 6% Hispanic, and 4% two or more races. About 21% of students at TTMS receive free or reduced lunch.

A concurrent mixed-methods design was utilized in this action research. I recruited a teacher, Mr. Patrick, from TTMS with whom to work on this action research. Mr. Patrick and I selected one of his classes with which to work, which consisted of twenty-seven students eighth grade students. This class was chosen because it was diverse both ethnically and academically. It was also a class that presented some classroom behavior challenges for Mr. Patrick prior to RP implementation. I provided an orientation for Mr. Patrick regarding the use of RP, specifically affective statements and questions. Prior to implementing AS and AQ in the classroom, I administered a classroom climate survey, the CLI, to the twenty-seven students in the selected class. Mr. Patrick then implemented AS and AQ in this classroom for six weeks. During this six week implementation window, I observed Mr. Patrick and provided him with feedback

regarding the implementation of AS and AQ. At the end of the six-week implementation period, I again administered the CLI to the same twenty-seven students in that class. I also conducted a focus group interview with four students and a semi-structured interview with Mr. Patrick. The purpose of the focus group was to provide more insight into their perspectives on the use of RP and of the classroom climate. The purpose of the teacher interview was to obtain his perception of the effects of using RP and his perception of classroom climate.

Descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine if there were significant differences in the pre- and post-test administrations of the CLI. Independent samples t-tests were utilized because no identifying information was collected from survey respondents, in an effort to encourage honesty, so their responses could not be tracked from pre-to post-implementation. Thus, the ideal statistical method for this scenario, paired samples t-tests, were not used because of this lack of respondent identity (Kent State University, 2018).

Both the focus group and teacher interviews were video recorded using an iPad. The video was then transcribed via an online transcription service. These transcripts were then coded using NVivo software. The coded transcripts were then reviewed identify patterns in the data. These patterns were then grouped into overarching themes.

Peer debriefing was used throughout the process of planning and carrying out the methodology and analysis of the results. Fellow action researchers, advisors, and other educators served provided critical feedback over the course of planning and engaging in the action research by providing written feedback, as well as serving as sounding boards.

This feedback was invaluable in its ability to add rigor and credibility to this action research study (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Review of Findings

The findings suggested that the use of RP did have some effects on classroom climate. The qualitative and quantitative findings, though, did not corroborate one another. The student focus group and teacher interview were highly congruent and suggested multiple dimensions of positive classroom climate after the implementation of AS and AQ. While the mean scores of some scales of the CLI did increase after implementation of AS and AQ, none were statistically significant.

There were some discrepancies in the data. The CLI indicated a non-significant decrease in the scale of teacher academic support after the implementation of RP. Oddly, the student focus group and teacher interview described high levels of teacher academic support, specifically teacher feedback on work. All sources indicated that the classroom climate was mostly positive both before and after implementation of AS and AQ.

Action Plan

TTMS has adopted a school-wide goal of decreasing the number of suspensions, particularly for boys. Incorporating the use of RP at TTMS on a broader scale could help accomplish this goal. Using information gained from this action research I, as an observer-researcher, can be an agent of change to assist in effectively implementing RP at TTMS, thereby working to reduce the use of exclusionary consequences. This is particularly significant for minority populations, who tend to receive more discipline referrals for more subjective infractions (Skiba et al., 2002). My action plan for implementing RP on a larger scale involves sharing the results of this action research,

deliberate planning with the school leadership team, review and refinement of training strategies, and monitoring and obtaining feedback about the implementation of RP at TTMS (see figure 3).

The first step in the action plan is to share the results of this action research. I will begin by sharing the results and reflecting on them with Mr. Patrick and our school leadership team. This information could also be shared with assistant principals at other schools in my district. I will next work with the leadership team to develop a plan to implement professional learning for our staff about RP and implementing affective statements and questions with teachers at TTMS. This plan would include incorporating RP training as part of our overall yearly schoolwork plan, and determining whether this would be implemented school-wide, or with a smaller group of staff members. This planning stage would also entail scheduling RP training during the school year.

As a curriculum leader I want to facilitate the implementation of RP through our school's weekly professional development sessions. Before beginning this, though, I would reflect on and refine the implementation process used with Mr. Patrick to develop training for other teachers. During the teacher interview Mr. Patrick shared that the training module and articles that were provided were helpful and easily accessible. He shared that the articles used did not come across as too academic in nature, and that they were very understandable and relatable to his classroom. I would, however, continue to look for other resources to supplement training teachers in the future. Mr. Patrick did note that it would be helpful to have video clips of these strategies in action. Therefore, I will search for such clips. If they are not available online, he volunteered to allow me to video him using affective statements and questions with his students, which could then be

used as exemplars for other teachers. Upon personal reflection, I would also like to provide more opportunities for teachers to practice using affective statements and questions in professional development sessions before using them in the classroom.

A key ingredient of my leadership philosophy, particularly as a school leader, is continuous learning. This idea is supported by Fullan (2014), who notes that, “the principal’s role is to lead the school’s teachers in a process of learning to improve their teaching, while learning alongside them about what works and what doesn’t” (p. 55). Fullan’s concept of the lead learner is what I aspire to be. The lead learner does not have to know all of the answers, but he is actively participating in the professional learning going on in the school. The leader’s active participation in professional learning is personally beneficial and, “makes all of the difference in creating community” (Brubaker, 2004, p. 96). Barth (1995) states it this way, “The more crucial role of the principal is as head learner, engaging in the most important enterprise of the schoolhouse - experiencing, displaying, modeling, and celebrating what it is hoped and expected that teachers and pupils will do” (p. 80).

As a lead learner I will collaborate with teachers to incorporate RP in their classrooms. Teacher training will occur during weekly professional learning sessions, each about an hour long, that are already a part of the school’s structure. These professional learning sessions will incorporate some methods that were used with Mr. Patrick, as well as refinements that are suggested above and other improvements that may surface as the ongoing process of reflection continues. Once teachers have been trained regarding the use of RP they will begin implementation. As part of this process the leadership team would conduct observations to provide specific feedback to teachers

about the incorporation of RP in their classes. Teachers would also reflect upon their use of RP and its effects. As we reflect upon the implementation of RP as a faculty, teacher leaders, like Mr. Patrick, may emerge who have experienced success. These teacher leaders would be encouraged to share their insights regarding RP. New questions about RP may arise that we, as a faculty, need to investigate. Throughout this process I will maintain the role as lead learner. In addition to obtaining feedback from classroom observations and teacher reflections, discipline data regarding the numbers of students receiving suspensions would also be monitored. This data, too, would be shared with teachers and with the leadership team at TTMS. Ideally, with the implementation of RP the number of suspensions would decrease (Gregory et al., 2014).

This process would continue with other RP strategies including the use of classroom circles and restorative conferences. This process may take multiple school years to fully enact. Throughout the process feedback from teachers, observations, and discipline data would be used to guide next steps. See figure 5.1, below, which depicts the action plan.

Implications

This section describes implications for the use of RP, specifically affective statements and affective questions, in the classroom and regarding larger-scale social justice concerns. Also discussed in this section are implications for effective implementation of affective statements and affective questions in the classroom.

Classroom implications. During the focus group interviews students reported a sense of academic support from their peers. In addition, the largest increase in mean score for any scale on the CLI was in the area of student academic support, although it

was not statistically significant. Mr. Patrick noticed that not only did he use AS with his students, but they adopted the practice for themselves and began using affective language with him and with each other. This incorporation of AS could contribute to positive peer interactions during cooperative learning experiences, especially when peers provide feedback to one another. In his class, Mr. Patrick teaches his students to use Berger's (2003) guidelines when providing feedback to one another. These guidelines state that feedback should be kind, specific, and helpful. The specific, helpful nature of this type of feedback aligns with the construct of affective statements (Smith et al., 2015). Thus, this type of feedback, which is regularly used in Mr. Patrick's class could contribute to improved academic support among peers. This increase in supportive peer relationships in learning contexts can benefit all students involved, both socially and academically (Wentzel, 2009).

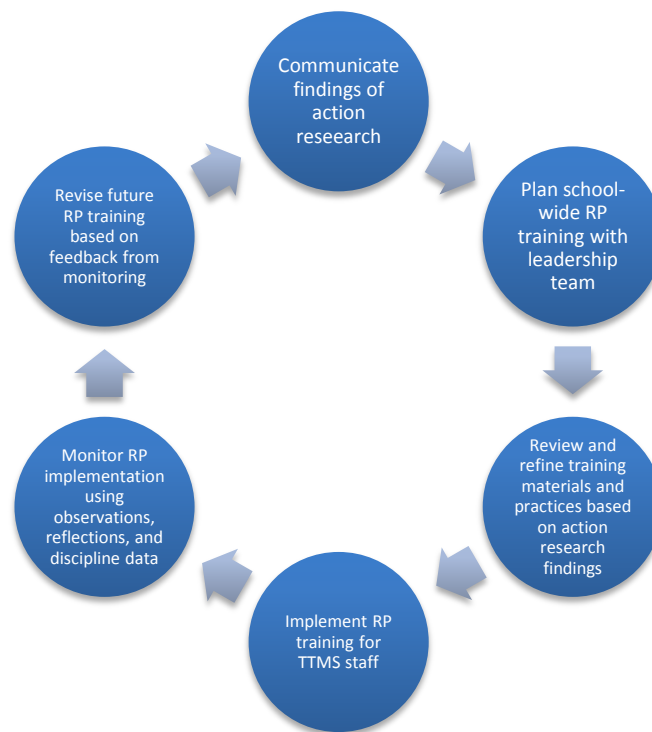


Figure 5.1 - Action plan for implementation of RP at TTMS

Although the CLI did not indicate a significant increase in teacher personal support as a result of RP, the focus group and teacher interview did. All students in the focus group described Mr. Patrick's class as feeling like "family," and they noted experiences where Mr. Patrick expressed care for them through his words and by listening to them. Mr. Patrick also noted that students seemed genuinely surprised when he asked questions and listened to what they had to say. This student perception of being listened to as a result of RP was also evidenced by McCluskey et al. (2008). These practices, which align with the use of affective statements and questions, seemed to help build strong teacher-student relationships. Supportive teacher-student relationships can have positive effects on students' academics (Wentzel, 1998), as well as their mental-wellbeing and social well-being (Wang, Brinkworth, & Eccles, 2013).

Social justice implications. The STPP is a construct which hypothesizes that the use of zero-tolerance policies and overuse of exclusionary consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions, puts students, particularly minority students, on a trajectory that leads them to increased interaction with the criminal justice system and, ultimately, to prison (Skiba et al., 2014). Factors at the classroom level, too, can lead students down the STPP. There is a tendency for minority students to receive higher proportions of discipline referrals than white students for offenses that are more subjective in nature. For instance, black and Hispanic students are more likely to be written up for offenses such as disrespect, excessive noise, and loitering (Skiba et al., 2002). Classroom instances of infractions such as perceived disrespect and excessive noise could be addressed first with RP strategies, such as AS and AQ, instead of discipline referrals

and/or exclusionary consequences. This could be a first step towards steering students away from the STPP (Gonzalez, 2012; Mallet, 2016).

During the teacher interview, Mr. Patrick described multiple times how the use of RP was a paradigm shift in classroom management for him. Before learning about and implementing RP, Mr. Patrick explained that he would issue commands to students and if they did not comply he would resort to discipline referrals or in-school suspension. Mr. Patrick noted that using AS and AQ opened up many more options for him regarding classroom management. He was more thoughtful about how he spoke to students when addressing behavior concerns, and he also listened more to students when conversing with them about these behavioral issues. These results of increased teacher reflection when addressing student behavior concerns corroborate findings by Bevington (2015). The use of RP gave Mr. Patrick a whole new mindset and array of tools to use with students to address classroom misbehavior before having to resort to discipline referrals. He also found that students often responded more favorably to these RP than they did to being scolded, sent out of the room, or being referred to administration.

The utilization of RP is not guaranteed to eliminate the use of administrative referrals or exclusionary consequences. However, incorporating affective language with students and listening to them certainly has the potential to diminish the frequency of the need for discipline referrals and exclusionary consequences (Smith et al., 2015; Gonzalez, 2012). In turn, this decrease in the use of exclusionary consequences can help keep students out of the STPP. In addition, the use of RP has the potential to improve student-teacher relationships (Costello et al., 2009; Martin, 2015), which can lead to

positive academic, social, and mental benefits for students (Wang, Brinkworth, & Eccles, 2013; Wentzel, 1998).

Implications for future research. The implementation of RP in schools is a burgeoning field. While multiple sources cite the potential of RP to improve school and classroom climate (Costello et al., 2009; Mirsky, 2011; Payne & Welch, 2017; Smith et al., 2015) there have been relatively few studies that quantitatively measure this in schools (Gregory et al., 2016; McCluskey et al., 2008). Therefore, further research into measuring the effects of RP on school and classroom climate, as well as specific elements of school and classroom climate, would be beneficial. Anyon et al. (2014) suggest that RP have the potential to improve racial inequities that exist in school discipline as an alternative to exclusionary consequences. Thus, it would also be interesting to implement these strategies with populations that have a higher percentage of minority students than did the sample in this particular action research.

Limitations

This action research has multiple limitations, which may have affected the results and/or may prohibit these results from being generalized to other settings. The first limitation is the nature of action research, itself. Action research is more focused on the problem of practice as related to the characteristics a particular setting than it is in producing results that are generalizable to other settings, as traditional research is (Schwallbach, 2003).

A second limitation is that in this action research AS and AQ were implemented with a single class by a single teacher. The results may have been different if a different teacher had been chosen with whom to collaborate. Mr. Patrick was open to trying new

strategies in his classroom. A teacher who is less open to new ideas may get different results. Likewise, if this action research had been implemented in another of Mr. Patrick's classes the students may have reacted differently, resulting in different findings.

A third limitation is that these results cannot be generalized to include all forms of RP. Only AS and AQ, which are on the informal end of the continuum of RP (Costello et al., 2009), were implemented in this action research. The findings from affective statements and affective questions cannot be assumed for more formal strategies like classroom circles or restorative conferences. Similarly, had other RP been implemented in this action research the findings may have differed.

A fourth limitation of this action research is the source of data that were utilized. The most glaring example is the use of the CLI as the classroom climate survey. While this is a trusted classroom climate survey, it did not address specific factors, such as teacher feedback, that were expressed during the student focus group and teacher interview. The use of a different classroom climate survey may have produced different findings.

A final limitation of this action research is the research design and ensuing statistical methodology that was utilized. Because the pre- and post-survey data was unpaired a paired-samples t-test could not be utilized, and independent-samples t-tests were used instead. The use of independent samples t-tests may have caused the statistical analysis to be less sensitive and to have possibly missed some areas of statistical significance (Stone et al., 2018). Therefore, in the future it is recommended to collect some type of identifying data so that paired t-tests could be used.

Conclusion

The use of the RP strategies of AS and AQ is promising because it has the potential to improve classroom climate (Costello et al., 2009; Gregory et al., 2016; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Smith et al., 2015), which can benefit students' academic achievement, social life, physical health, and mental well-being (Koth et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2015; Thapa et al., 2013; Wang, Brinkworth, & Eccles, 2013; Wentzel, 1998). The results of this action research indicate that AS and AQ can have positive impacts on aspects of classroom climate at TTMS, particularly students' academic support of one another. The use of RP also has the potential to benefit historically disenfranchised populations, who have experienced disproportionately high rates of receiving exclusionary consequences, which can usher them into the STPP (Gonzalez, 2012; Skiba et al., 2002).

As a result of this action research, an action plan has been developed that will lead to training more teachers at TTMS regarding the use of RP in the classroom. By broadening the use of RP at TTMS it may be possible to improve the climate of more classrooms within the school, thereby benefiting more teachers and students.

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Appendix A – Classroom Life Inventory

	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Mostly True	Always True
In this class other students want me to do my best schoolwork.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class are my best friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not doing as well in school as I would like to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it hard to speak my thoughts clearly in class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class other students like to help me learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School work is fairly easy for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class other students think it is important to be my friend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we work together in small groups we try to make sure that everyone in our group learns the assigned material.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do school work to make my teacher happy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class I like to work with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I should get along with other students better than I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do school work because my classmates expect it of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teacher really cares about me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we work together in small groups our job is not done until everyone in our group has finished the assignment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teacher thinks it is important to be my friend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class everyone has an equal chance to be successful if they do their best.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class other students care about how much I learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whenever I take a test I am afraid I will fail.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am doing a good job of learning in this class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class other students like me the way I am.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we work together in small groups we all receive the same grade.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teacher cares about how much I learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do school work to make my parents happy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class everybody is a friend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Mostly True	Always True
In this class other students want me to come to class every day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do school work to keep my teacher from getting mad at me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we work together in small groups our grade depends on how much all members learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teacher likes to see my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class other students care about my feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often get discouraged in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class other students like me as much as they like others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class if a students works hard, he/she can definitely succeed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teacher likes to help me learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we work together in small groups I have to make sure that the other members learn if I want to do well on the assignment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class other students really care about me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have lots of questions I never get a chance to ask in class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do school work to be liked by other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teacher wants me to do my best in schoolwork.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we work together in small groups we cannot complete an assignment unless everyone contributes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teacher likes me as much as she/he likes other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am often lonely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class students get the scores they deserve, no more and no less.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teacher cares about my feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class all of the students know each other well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class I deserve the scores I get.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a good student.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Never True	Rarely True	Sometimes True	Mostly True	Always True
When we work together in small groups the teacher divides up the material so that everyone has a part and everyone has to share.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel upset in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I think the scoring system in this class is NOT fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we work together in small groups we have to share materials in order to complete the assignment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class I like to share my ideas and materials with other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we work together in small groups everyone's ideas are needed if we are going to be successful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class I can learn important things from other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class I like to help other students learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class I try to share my ideas and materials with other students when I think it will help them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we work together in small groups I have to find out what everyone else knows if I am going to be able to do the assignment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class it is a good idea for students to help each other learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class I like to cooperate with other students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In this class students learn lots of important things from each other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix B – Focus Group Questions

I read this statement to the focus group participants prior to beginning the interview:

I will not share your responses to these questions with Mr. Patrick. I may use some quotes in my writing, but I will not use your name. Whatever is said in here needs to stay in here. I am trusting you to not talk about this conversation with other students. However, I cannot guarantee that everyone will keep that expectation.

- How would you describe what Mr. Patrick's classroom feels like?
- Have you noticed any changes in your classes since we started this study?
- Describe the feedback that Mr Patrick gives.
 - Do you like it? Why/why not?
- How does Mr. Patrick address someone who is disrupting class, for example, interrupting him while he's trying to talk?
 - How does this response make you feel?
- Do you think Mr. Patrick cares about you as a person? Why or why not?
- Do you think Mr. Patrick cares about you as a learner? Why or why not?
- How do students get along in Mr. Patrick's class. Better, same, or worse than other classes? Why?

Appendix C – Teacher Interview Questions

- How would you describe the climate of your classroom prior to implementing RP?
- Do you feel the climate of your classroom changed since implementing RP?
- In your own words, describe how you used restorative practices in your classroom.
 - Did you use AS and AQ?
- How effectively do you feel you implemented using RPs? Explain.
- How did students respond when you used RP (AS and AQ) to address concerns?
- How did it feel to use AS and AQ? [Did it feel awkward / forced / contrived / comfortable]?
 - Can you relate an instance where you got a positive response by using AS?
- Can you relate an instance where you got a positive response by using AQ?
- Would you recommend using this practice to another teacher? Why or why not?
- How could this experience be improved?
- What aspect(s) of the coaching helped you the most to implement RP? What else regarding training would be helpful?

Appendix D – Questions in Each Scale of the CLI

Cooperative Learning

- In this class I like to share my ideas and materials with other students.
- In this class I can learn important things from other students.
- In this class I like to help other students learn.
- In this class I try to share my ideas and materials with other students when I think it will help them.
- In this class it is a good idea for students to help each other learn.
- In this class I like to cooperate with other students.
- In this class students learn lots of important things from each other.

Positive Goal Interdependence

- When we work together in small groups we try to make sure that everyone in our group learns the assigned material.
- When we work together in small groups our job is not done until everyone in our group has finished the assignment.
- When we work together in small groups we all receive the same grade.
- When we work together in small groups our grade depends on how much all members learn.
- When we work together in small groups I have to make sure that the other members learn if I want to do well on the assignment.

Resource Interdependence

- When we work together in small groups we cannot complete an assignment unless everyone contributes.
- When we work together in small groups the teacher divides up the material so that everyone has a part and a share to do.
- When we work together in small groups we have to share materials in order to complete the assignment.
- When we work together in small groups everyone's ideas are needed if we are going to be successful.
- When we work together in small groups I have to find out what everyone else knows if I am going to be able to do the assignment.

Teacher Academic Support

- My teacher cares about how much I learn.
- My teacher likes to see my work.
- My teacher likes to help me learn.
- My teacher wants me to do my best in school work.

Teacher Personal Support

- My teacher really cares about me.
- My teacher thinks it is important to be my friend.
- My teacher likes me as much as he likes other students.
- My teacher cares about my feelings.

Student Academic Support

- In this class other students want me to do my best school work.
- In this class other students like to help me learn.
- In this class other students care about how much I learn.
- In this class other students want me to come to class every day.

Student Personal Support

- In this class other students think it is important to be my friend.
- In this class other students like me the way I am.
- In this class other students care about my feelings.
- In this class other students like me as much as they like others. In this class other students really care about me.

Class Cohesion

- In this class are my best friends.
- In this class I like to work with others.
- In this class everybody is a friend.
- I am often lonely. [Reverse scored]
- In this class all of the students know each other well.

Fairness of Grading

- In this class everyone has an equal chance to be successful if they do their best.
- In this class if a student works hard he/she can definitely succeed.
- In this class students get the scores they deserve; no more and no less.
- In this class I deserve the scores I get.
- Sometimes I think the scoring system in this class is NOT fair. [Reverse scored]

Achieving for Social Approval

- I do school work to make my teacher happy.

- I do school work because my classmates expect it of me.
- I do school work to make my parents happy.
- I do school work to keep my teacher from getting mad at me.
- I do school work to be liked by other students.

Academic Self-Esteem

- I am NOT doing as well in school as I would like to. [Reverse Scored]
- School work is fairly easy for me.
- Whenever I take a test I am afraid I will fail. [Reverse Scored]
- I am doing a good job of learning in this class.
- I am a good student.

Alienation

- I am NOT doing as well in school as I would like to.
- I find it hard to speak my thoughts clearly in class.
- School work is fairly easy for me. [Reverse Scored]
- I should get along with other students better than I do.
- Whenever I take a test I am afraid I will fail. [Reverse Scored]
- I often get discouraged in school.
- I have lots of questions that I never get a chance to ask in class.
- I am often lonely.
- I am a good student. (Reverse Scored)
- I often feel upset in school.
- Sometimes I think the scoring system in this class is NOT fair.